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september/october 2001

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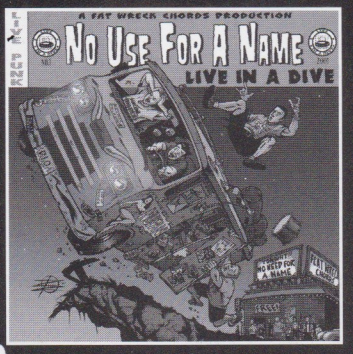
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HITLIST #14

volume 3 number 2
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THE REAL McKENZIES

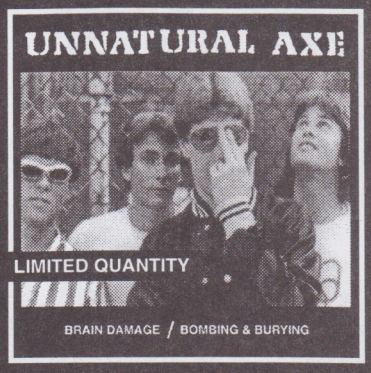
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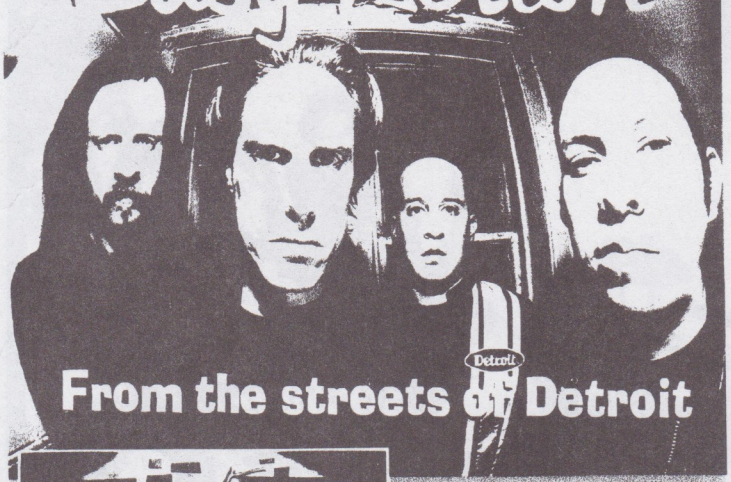
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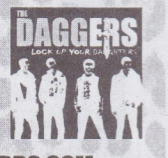
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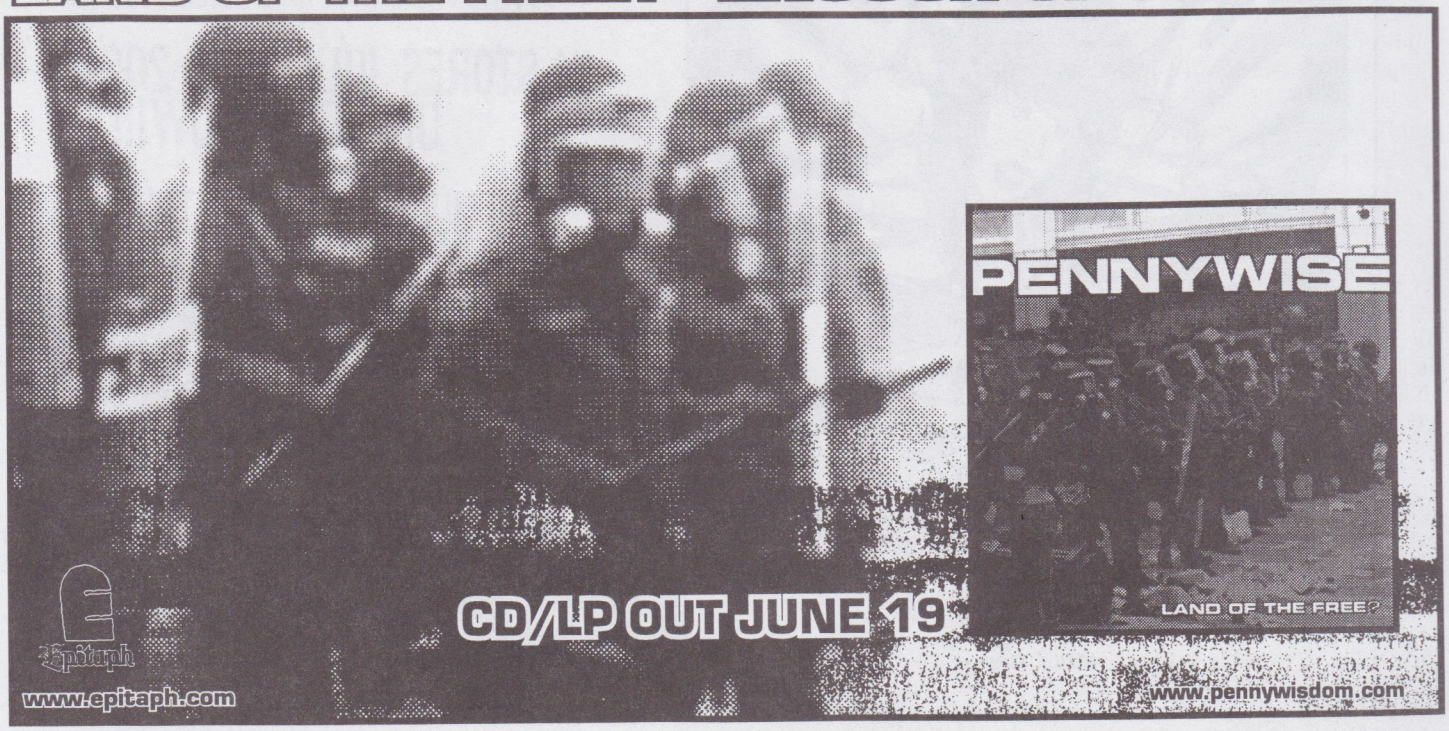
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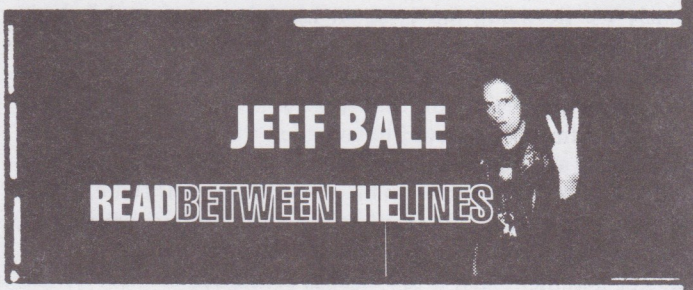
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DO AS WE DON'T: TALES OF SANCTIMONIOUS HYPOCRISY

A couple of weekends ago, I reluctantly attended the annual Mordam convention. I say "reluctantly" because, under normal circumstances, I would never go out of my way to attend business meetings, either at Mordam or anywhere else. The reason is simple: I find all business-oriented discussions to be dull to the point of being soporific, and every bit as painful as a root canal operation. This may seem to be a strange attitude for someone who has created a small, "hip capitalist" business, but the last thing in the world that I consider myself to be is a businessperson. (That's why I leave the economic aspects of running *Hit List* to Brett!) On top of that, the convention was held in Sacramento, where Mordam has now relocated, not San Francisco (where it was held in the past). For readers who are unfamiliar with California — and with profuse apologies to all decent and reasonably cool Sacramento residents — let me put it this way: living in Sacramento is roughly equivalent to going to Hell before you die, given that it's unbearably hot, deadly dull, butt ugly, hopelessly square, and the seat of the state's corrupt government. Although only ninety miles from the Bay Area, it might as well be in Oklahoma's dustbowl, culturally-speaking.

Why, then, did I feel compelled to travel to Hell and attend a business convention? Because I wanted to make one last-ditch effort, on behalf of the majority of the magazines distributed by Mordam, to change our distributor's absurd "no major labels" policy. In a previous issue of *Hit List* (May-June 2001), I pointed out just how counterproductive and blatantly hypocritical that policy is, and now felt that it was necessary to reiterate these same points, in person, for the benefit of Mordam's staff (many of whom are newly-hired) and the representatives/owners of the labels it currently distributes. As annoyed as I was to have to state the obvious, I again emphasized the simple fact that Mordam had long been doing business with huge corporate music entities, such as Tower and Virgin. If they considered such corporations to be evil incarnate, or at least irredeemably corrupt from an ethical standpoint, as their proclaimed policy would suggest, why were they regularly (and apparently happily) doing business with them? And as of this writing, MORDAM HAS JUST INKED A DEAL WITH INGRAM, THE BIGGEST CORPORATE MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTOR IN THE UNITED STATES. Yet they still insist that the magazines they distribute (and claim to support) don't have a right to accept ads from Sub Pop and other labels with any connection, no matter how tangential, to the corporate music biz. (Even more amazingly, we aren't explicitly prohibited from taking ads from huge oil, tobacco, or alcohol corporations, but God forbid that we should ever try to solicit ads for the RAMONES reissues on Rhino or the BLACK HALOS' latest album!) Here is how I put it at the meeting. If Mordam made a decision to refuse to have *any* business dealings at all with corporate entities, which would severely curtail its sales, and if certain Mordam-distributed labels were to demand that Mordam *not* distribute their products in big corporate chains, which would likewise cost them lots of sales, then and only then would they have the right to get up on their high moral horses and tell *us* not to have any dealings with corporate entities. In that case, however stupid and counterproductive, their policy would at least be morally consistent. I would then respect them for adhering to their stated principles, and look for another distributor — since Mordam wouldn't be around for very long if they tried to operate on such a ridiculous basis. Yet in their misguided efforts to *appear* morally righteous (or perhaps in order to assuage their self-imposed "guilt" about having established successful business enterprises), neither Mordam nor some of the "hip capitalist" labels it distributes seem to have any qualms whatsoever about imposing the types of destructive restrictions on *others* that they would rarely, if ever, impose on themselves. A clearer example of sanctimonious hypocrisy would be hard to find.



Living in Sacramento is roughly equivalent to going to Hell before you die.

One might have expected that, after being confronted face to face with something that obvious and irrefutable, the people representing Mordam and certain labels would get defensive and try to draw some sort of dubious moral distinction between what they were doing and what we wanted to do. And in the morning section, Jacqueline, apparently speaking on behalf of *MRR*, made an ineffectual attempt to do just that. When I asked her why it was morally acceptable to sell product to some of the world's biggest corporate chains but not to take ads from relatively small, semi-independent labels, the best she could come up with was that it was important to get punk stuff out to "the kids" who didn't have a cool underground store in their area and were consequently dependent upon chain stores like Tower. It scarcely needs to be pointed out that this proclaimed desire to reach more "kids" with their message is precisely the rationale used by 90% of the underground bands which sign contracts with major labels, the very same bands that *MRR* accuses of being "sell-outs" and then banishes from its pages. In the end, Jacqueline cautiously acknowledged that the people at *MRR* weren't perfect — one of the world's great understatements, considering that she was referring to the most hypocritical, unscrupulous, and ethically-challenged punk publication that has ever existed — but then said something to the

effect that just because *they* weren't perfect, others shouldn't be allowed to make moral compromises. In short, do as we don't.

By the afternoon session, these pathetic efforts to draw untenable moral distinctions had been more or less abandoned. Even the key people who supported the maintenance of Mordam's policy publicly admitted that it was "inconsistent" (Aaron), "hypocritical" (Ruth), and "arbitrary" (Ruth again), which was exactly my point. To provide only one memorable example, after claiming that his motivations for putting out records (to "put out great records") were so utterly different from those of major labels (who only wanted to make money) that it wasn't really appropriate to do business with them, Slim from Kill Rock Stars admitted that he didn't have any problems cashing the checks he had received from major labels (apparently for licensing material on his label to them)! I don't have any problems with that, either — more power to him — but if it's OK for Slim to cash the devil's checks why isn't it OK for us to do so? One might have thought that this succession of grudging but honest public admissions would have ended the matter right then and there. After all, if Mordam and the labels it distributed openly admitted that they were already busy "sleeping with the enemy," metaphorically speaking, how could they continue to demand that only the magazines refuse to "collaborate with the enemy" by taking ads? Yet astonishingly, a few people continued to support the existing policy, even though none of them made any serious effort to confront, much less resolve, the moral contradictions involved. Apparently, it just them made them "feel better" to maintain a wholly symbolic anti-corporate policy which had no adverse economic impact on *them* and didn't affect their own compromised behavior one iota. Although several sensible people publicly opposed Mordam's policy and agreed with me for one reason or another, either because they thought it was a non-issue (like Darren from Jade Tree and Dave from Age of Enlightenment publicity), or that labels should be able to make licensing agreements with majors (like Uli from Alternative Tentacles), or that magazines should be able to take ads from anyone they wished to (like Mica from Crypt), others blithely proceeded as if such blatant hypocrisy was perfectly acceptable. Whether this was because they wanted to punish the person who pointed out their hypocrisy in no uncertain terms (i.e., me), or whether they were desperately clinging to some ill-conceived moral stance because they suddenly realized how hypocritical they had been, or whether they were too shy to speak out in opposition to the policy (several people later admitted — in private — that they agreed with me, but for some reason couldn't muster sufficient *cojones* to say so publicly), or whether they honestly couldn't make up their minds, or whether they were just too damn stupid to grasp the obvious, is anyone's guess. Once again, however, do as we don't seems to be the watchword at Mordam.

At the convention, Mordam distributed copies of a 12 May 2001 article that appeared in the corporate music biz's chief publication, *Billboard*, which confirmed the points which Jack Rabid and I had made in previous *Hit List* columns — namely, that the horrendous glut of indie releases is making it impossible for many indie labels to even survive, much less prosper. Here are the startling figures: of the 288,591 albums released last year, 205,212 of them (71.1%) came out on indie labels, but the sales of indie albums only amounted to a mere 16.6% of the total number of albums sold. In practice, this meant that the average indie album sold a grand total of 635 copies! These paltry figures are not limited to punk (or even rock'n'roll) releases, and exclude the figures for 7" records, but they are nonetheless shocking and help to explain why so many indie punk labels have gone out of business or are barely able to make ends meet, a situation made even worse by the downturn in the American economy since the Dimwit was "elected" (if only by the Supreme Court). This in turn has potentially disastrous repercussions for underground punk magazines, which depend primarily upon the ad revenue they receive from indie punk labels to survive. In recent months, as any punkzine editor can tell you, raising sufficient ad revenue from underground sources has become increasingly difficult due to the hard times that have befallen so many labels. Yet now, precisely because Mordam has made this new deal with corporate giant Ingram, we will all soon be expected to provide them with several thousand more copies of our magazines, many of which will probably end up coming back as returns since they'll be sent to chain stores (including the Christian-owned Waldenbooks) that don't have a rock'n'roll clientele. In short, at the very moment when ad revenue is in relatively short supply, we will all have to raise several thousand dollars more each issue to publish our respective magazines. Instead of allowing us to compensate for these additional expenses by expanding our base of advertisers and taking ads from labels with some connection, however obscure, to major labels, Mordam is continuing to insist that we rely solely on underground sources to raise money. This is, not to put too fine a point on it, a recipe for economic disaster. It is equivalent to insisting that Mordam restrict itself to selling products to indie stores, and that it not do any business at all with corporate entities, something which would drive it out of business within a couple of months.

One of the little sectarian nimrods now running *MRR*, who is currently defraying a portion of his monthly living expenses thanks to the magazine that *I* co-founded and helped to build up from scratch, unkindly suggested that if I didn't like Mordam's policy, I could leave and find another distributor. On the face of it, that seems fair enough. But I've got news for you, sonny boy. Other than *MRR*, which can probably weather any economic storm simply because it costs a mere 35 cents apiece to produce (and whose piss-poor material quality is matched only by its debased intellectual quality — who can forget their transcription, in a Dave Emory column, of Daghestan as "Dogistan"? It's a good thing that Kazakhstan wasn't mentioned by Dave as well, or we would surely have found "Catsistan" listed alongside "Dogistan"!), every single magazine that is currently being distributed by Mordam is opposed to their existing ad policy. Dan from *Punk Planet* is opposed to it more for procedural reasons than substantive ones, but the rest of us (Mike from *Gearhead*, myself and Brett from *Hit List*, and Mel from *Shredding Paper*) have always been opposed to it for the perfectly legitimate reasons that I outlined above: it's ethically untenable, hypocritical from a behavioral standpoint, and economically counterproductive. In exchange for allowing Ruth and certain Mordam employees to "feel good" about running a successful business, it harms the very underground entities that Mordam claims to be fostering and helping. What kind of distributor adopts a policy that seriously interferes with the economic viability of the labels and magazines it distributes, and indeed has the potential to put them out of business? Alas, since magazines account for less than 5% of Mordam's total sales, we don't have very much economic clout or leverage, either individually or collectively. If this sort of foolishness continues, however, it's only a matter of time before we are all forced to leave Mordam and find other distributors. I personally would prefer not to have to do that, since Ruth and I have been friends for many years and Mike Jones and several other people who work at Mordam are very cool individuals. But if we're faced with a choice between going under or leaving Mordam, only one course of action will be available to us. The same goes for *Gearhead* and the others.

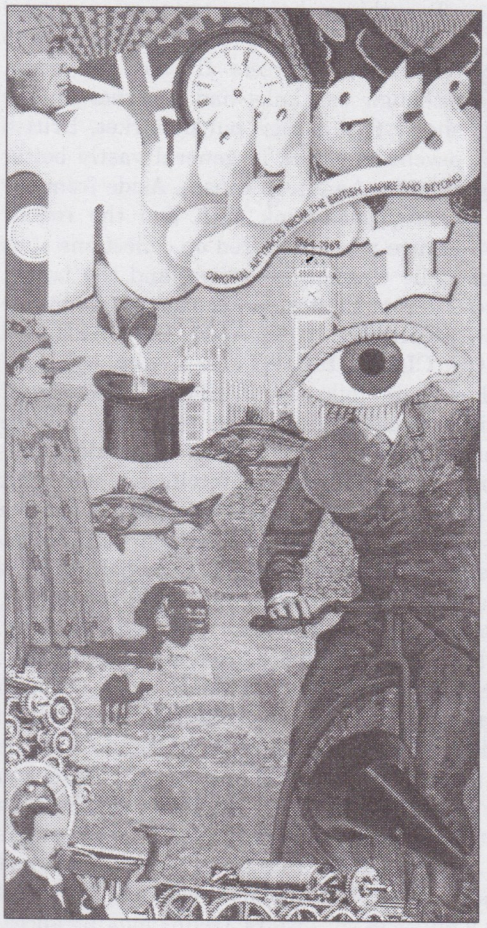
FOR THOSE ABOUT TO PUNK OUT, I SALUTE YOU

JEFFBALE

This time around, the "blessed event" — as Ramsay Kanaan might put it — is the release of Rhino's 4-CD "Nuggets II" box set. Unless you've been hiding out in a cave for decades, or know nothing at all about rock'n'roll — which can only lead one to wonder why you're reading *Hit List* — you probably already own, or at least know all about, the first "Nuggets" box set. For one thing, I devoted nearly three pages of an earlier column (in the September-October 1999 issue) to a review of it, but in case you've got a poor, drug-addled recall, let me refresh your memory. The original "Nuggets" was a double LP that was compiled by Lenny Kaye (future guitarist for the PATTI SMITH GROUP) and released by Elektra in 1972. It was subtitled "Artyfacts from the First Psychedelic Era, 1965-1968," but actually contained a diverse array of American mid- to late 60's punk, garage, pop, and psychedelic bands, many of which were obscure but some of which had inadvertently scored big radio hits, at least regionally. Decades later, in the late 1990s, that original album was expanded into a beautiful 4-CD, $60 box set, courtesy of Rhino Records, a reissue label which took a gamble and ended up with a surprisingly good-selling release on their hands. Fortunately, this unexpected success prompted them to round up the usual gaggle of 60's r'n'r experts — but not, unfortunately, me — and gamble once again by releasing a second "Nuggets" boxset.

Like the first, this one contains four CDs chock full of fabulous rock'n'roll (109 tracks in all), a nice outer box with "psychedelic" artwork, and a beautiful full-color 100-page booklet featuring loads of cool pics and essays by Gary Stewart (the Rhino cat in charge of the project), Greg Shaw of Bomp, and Alec Palao (compiler of many great Big Beat/Ace label reissues), plus detailed liner notes on all the bands and songs by the indefatigable Mike Stax (of *Ugly Things* fame). This is all as it should be. Unlike the first, which focused on American garage bands, this one is subtitled "Original Artyfacts from the British Empire and Beyond, 1964-1969." What that means, in plain English, is that it contains bands from everywhere but the United States (with one glaring exception). The sticker on the cellophane wrapping also announces, with some degree of exaggeration, that all the songs within were "hitless," a tag that certainly doesn't apply to, say, the EASYBEATS' "Friday On My Mind". In terms of musical styles, "Nuggets II" features a tiny bit of Merseybeat and twee pop, and a good deal of tough R&B, beat punk, Modbeat, freakbeat, psychedelia, American-style 60's garage punk (mainly courtesy of the Canadians, Aussies, and Kiwis), and all the possible permutations in between. (For an analysis of these various musical genres, I refer you all to my column in the November-December 1999 issue of *Hit List*.) This turns out to be quite a wide spectrum of sounds, particularly when one recalls that there are so many different kinds of pop and psychedelia (ranging from pop psych to heavy rockin' psych to bizarre experimental psych, although mercifully, the last-named is scarcely in evidence herein). No one, then, should expect all the songs to sound alike on this release.

The first point that needs to be made is that 75% of the material on this collection is absolutely fantastic, which in and of itself is an extraordinary accomplishment given the vastness of the project. Indeed, some of the greatest bands in rock'n'roll history are prominently featured. Among these are Modbeat/freakbeat monsters like the CREATION, R&B roughnecks (and, later, psychedelic princes) like the PRETTY THINGS, Merseybeat masters like Australia's EASYBEATS (though their selections here are atypically tough), and beat punk bashers like Holland's Q'65, all of whom are justifiably represented by more than one track. (There's no such thing as too much Q'65, as far as I'm concerned.) In addition to these relatively famous "cult" groups from the era, whose talent virtually everyone that's knowledgeable about 60's r'n'r recognizes and appreciates, one can also find a huge number of ear-shredding and/or mind-boggling songs by more obscure bands from every nook and cranny of the globe. In the beat punk/R&B category, for example, one can single out Australia's MISSING LINKS (yikes!) and LOST SOULS, Holland's CUBY & THE BLIZZARDS (amazing!) and OUTSIDERS, Austria's SLAVES (wow!), Britain's FAIRIES, PRIMITIVES, BIRDS, and DOWNLINERS SECT, Germany's RATTLES and BOOTS ("Gaby"), and New Zealand's CHANTS R&B for special mention. In the guitar-heavy Modbeat category, there are the EYES, the SMOKE, FIRE, the SORROWS, and DAVY JONES (soon to become DAVID BOWIE) & THE LOWER THIRD from England, the MOTIONS from Holland, RONNIE BURNS from Australia, and the MOPS from Japan. For blasting freakbeat, look no further than Britain's own MICKEY FINN, the CRAIG, the IDLE RACE ("Imposters of Life's Magazine"), the ELOIS, and WIMPLE WINCH, Iceland's THOR'S HAMMER, America's (!!!!) MISUNDERSTOOD, Australia's MASTERS APPRENTICES and ATLANTICS (with Johnny Rebb on vocals), New Zealand's SMOKE, and Denmark's RED SQUARES. For American-style fuzz punk, check out New Zealand's BLUE STARS (superlative!) and LA DE DAS, and Canada's UGLY DUCKLINGS (phew!), the JURY, and the HAUNTED. Turning now to psychedelia, one can find strong tracks by Britain's STATUS QUO, the OPEN MIND, the FACTORY, EPISODE SIX, the VOICE, TINTERN ABBEY, the KALEIDOSCOPE ("Flight from Ashiya"), the MAJORITY, and CALEB, Peru's WE ALL TOGETHER, Mexico's CHIJUAS, and Australia's PLAYBOYS. Finally, on the Merseybeat front, one should take special note of Sweden's MASCOTS, Holland's GOLDEN EARRINGS and SOUND MAGICS, Britain's MOCKINGBIRDS, and Uruguay's SHAKERS. Lastly, there's one great pure pop song, the MOVES' "I Can Hear the Grass Grow" (even though I hate their other offering, "Fire Brigade"). The twee pop items will be dealt with below, in the complaint section.



HIT SQUAD



Two things became even more crystal clear to me after listening three times to the entire "Nuggets II" box set. First, although us Yanks had a corner on the snotty 60's garage punk market, British psychedelia was in general vastly better than its American cousin. Aside from the nasty psych-punk stuff and the rockin' garage psych featured on collections such as Billy Synth's "Psychedelic Unknowns" series, and the jangly, folk-influenced psychedelia from California (as exemplified by the mid-period BYRDS, JEFFERSON AIRPLANE, QUICKSILVER MESSENGER SERVICE, CLEAR LIGHT, and — although they were as bluesy as they were folky — MOBY GRAPE), most American psych was either tuneless, overly experimental, or prone to descend into extended blues-based jamming. In marked contrast, the Brits had a real knack for penning terrific pop melodies, even when they were "higher" than proverbial kites, which had the effect of lifting many songs that might otherwise have been far too precious into the transcendant, ethereal category. British psych is appealingly haunting and often just downright beautiful-sounding, whereas American psych is often annoying and ugly-sounding. Second, no countries have produced more great rock'n'roll bands per capita than Australia, New Zealand, Holland, and — though it's shockingly underrepresented on this collection — Sweden. There's not a single duff track from any of those countries to be found herein (except perhaps the TAGES' mediocre "I Read You Like an Open Book"; why not, e.g., select that band's "The Man You'll Be Looking For"?). It sometimes seems as if every single Aussie and Kiwi band turned their guitars up to "11" and then just wailed and thrashed away with wild abandon, which is just what one might expect from a bunch of yobs whose troublemaking ancestors were sequestered in a penal colony halfway across the world from their homeland. No doubt there's a parallel with America there somewhere. As for the Dutch, well, they were only a hop, skip, and a jump across the English Channel from Britain, so they were exposed to the music and fashions associated with the British Invasion in an unusually direct and intimate fashion.

If the above-mentioned songs can all be said to be fabulous, which in some cases is a severe understatement, it must be admitted that 15-20% of this box set consists of tracks that are decent but scarcely noteworthy, and just under 5% of it is embarrassingly bad. In the so-so category are the WHEELS, the SYNDICATS (whose "Crawdaddy Simone" is one of the most overrated of so-called freakbeat songs), the ZIPPS, the SYN, LOVE SCULPTURE (too "classical"-sounding), PANDAMONIUM, the ACID GALLERY, DANTALION'S CHARIOT, SANDS, SCRUGG, and the MARMALADE (overly syrupy). In the just plain awful category are RUPERT'S CHILDREN (even one PROCOL HARUM is far too many), the wimp-pop of TIMON, the limp blue-eyed soul of the ACTION (Phil Collins' favorite band — need I say more?), the fey psych of the BLOSSOM TOES, and the tedious proto-prog rock of TIMEBOX, as well as the lame offerings by Spain's BRAVOS and Brazil's MUTANTES (sorry, Johan) — much better bands could easily have been picked from these last two countries. In a few cases, the problem isn't so much with the bands themselves (though the KOOBAS were medicore at best) as with the truly horrible and somewhat unrepresentative songs that were chosen, e.g., the KOOBAS' "The First Cut is the Deepest" and the SMALL FACES' "Here Come the Nice". I mean, why not pick pounders like "Face" or "What'cha Gonna Do About It" for those two bands? And while we're on the subject of questionable song selection, I would have preferred to see the POETS' brilliant, moody "I Love Her Still" (or their 1964 demo of "This Woman Mine"!) and GOLDEN EARRINGS' punked-out "Chunk of Steel" substituted for the selections found here (even though the latter's "Daddy Buy Me a Girl" is a really terrific Mersey-style track, so including two EARRINGS songs would have been fine by me).

More seriously, there are a number of astonishing lacunae in the lineup of bands and songs found herein. The best way to illustrate this point would be to list the amazing songs that I would have picked had I been involved in the selection process, items which I believe should have been substituted for those panned in the previous paragraph. Here they are, in no particular order of preference:

1) **The A-CADS** (South Africa) — "Hungry For Love"
2) **The LIVERPOOL FIVE** (Britain) — "She's Mine"
3) **A PASSING FANCY** (Canada) — "I'm Losing Tonight" (45 version)
4) **The KINGPINS (Britain)** — "You're My Gal"
5) **The GAME (Britain)** — "Help Me Mummy's Gone"
6) **The GAME** (") — "Gonna Get Me Someone"
7) **The LORDS** (Germany) — "Don't Mince Matter"
8) **The ATTACK** (Britain) — "Feel Like Flying" (nudge, nudge, wink, wink)
9) **The NAMELOSERS** (Sweden) — "Do Ao"
10) **The MOLES** (Britain) — "We Are the Moles" (parts 1 and 2)
11) **The BEAT MERCHANTS** (Britain) — "Pretty Face" (what happened, Mike?)
12) **The FIVE GENTLEMEN** (France) — "LSD 25"
13) **The CHASERS** (Britain) — "Inspiration"
14) **THANE RUSSELL & THREE** (Britain) — "Security"
15) **ANNAABEE-NOX** — (Sweden) — "Bo Bo Boggie Pack"
16) **The FAVOURITE SONS** (Britain) — "Walking Walking Walking"
17) **The BARRIER** (Britain) — "Dawn Breaks Through"
18) **The SHANES** (Sweden) — "I Don't Want Your Love"
19) **The LIONS** (Denmark) — "I Want You"
20) **PLEASE** (Britain) — "We Aim to Please"
21) **The SAUTERELLES** (Switzerland) — "Janet"
22) **SOUND LTD SET** (Sweden) — "Sunside World"
23) **The SNAP SHOTS** (Belgium) — "Hip Hip Hurray"
24) **The FOUR LEAVED CLOVERS** (Britain) — "Alright Girl"
25) **LAVENDER GROVE** (Britain) — "Lavender Grove"
26) **The JUNIORS** (Greece) — "Let Me In"
27) something from the **MOCKERS** (Argentina) — (sorry, I can't find my copy of their record).

I think these tracks are as good as anything on the "Nuggets II" box set, and that they totally blow away those tracks which I previously characterized as mediocre or awful. Give 'em a listen and decide for yourselves. Maybe someone should put out another comp entitled "Fabulous Non-Hits that Should Have Been on 'Nuggets II'"!

In addition to these questionable band or song selections, there are a few other minor flaws with this box set. First, in a few cases the sound quality isn't up to par. For example, the BIRDS tracks here sound far less tough and punchy than they do on the remastered BIRDS compilation CD that was released last year, and the FAIRIES' cut sounds a little...well...femme-y. Secondly, and far less excusably, in some instances the sound *levels* don't seem to have been properly equalized, i.e., some songs sound a whole lot louder than those on either side of them, and this doesn't seem to be a function of the different musical styles

involved. Finally, Rhino decided to include only bands that sang in the English language, apparently because they believed that music fans wouldn't shell out their money to hear great rock-'n'roll sung in foreign languages. Maybe they based this decision on past experiences, but it still seems absurd to me. After all, people who love rock'n'roll love it because of the *sound*, not the lyrics. At best, the lyrics can only add some layers of icing on the cake. The practical effect of this decision was to automatically exclude some the best material from Latin America and virtually all of the material from more "exotic" countries like Turkey. As a result, the listener has been deprived of hearing some amazing garage punk tracks (like several of those on the recent "Delincuentes" compilation LP) and some astonishingly innovative songs combining indigenous musical traditions with the "new" sounds of rock'n'roll (like many of those on the "Turkish Delights" comp LP). With any luck, some of these foreign-language gems will appear on a "Nuggets III" box set.



Being a negative punk rocker and a fanatically obsessive r'n'r fan who feels perversely compelled to turn others on to the music I love, it would have been impossible for me to avoid criticizing certain aspects of a vast and ambitious project like "Nuggets II". But please don't misunderstand me. The truth is that this is one of the greatest collections of music that has ever been compiled, and in that sense it is an eminently worthy successor to the first "Nuggets" box set. Given the fact that twelve highly-opinionated experts were involved in the selection process, it's remarkable how consistently great "Nuggets II" turned out to be — especially since some of the compilers clearly imbibed too many "magic mushrooms" at some point in their lives. Normally, too many cooks spoil the broth, and that could very easily have happened in this case. Yet miraculously, it didn't. Everyone involved in this project therefore deserves our utmost respect and heartfelt thanks. Let me put it this way: YOU NEED THIS BOX SET! If you only had $500 with which to purchase a collection of great rock'n'roll music, you'd be a fool not to spend the initial $125 on the two "Nuggets" box sets, since together they cover most of the great lesser-known rock'n'roll music from the 60s. Then all you'd have to do is pick up a collection of stellar 50's rock (here, yet another Rhino box set, "Loud, Fast and Out of Control", will stand you in good stead); the greatest hits packages from the BEATLES, ROLLING STONES, KINKS, YARDBIRDS, WHO, BYRDS, BEACH BOYS, and ELVIS; the three STOOGES LPs, the first VELVET UNDERGROUND LP, ALICE COOPER's "Love It To Death", and the first NEW YORK DOLLS LP; a top-notch collection of West Coast "hippie" bands (which, as far as I know, does not yet exist); a good glam rock collection (unlike those that currently exist); and, last but certainly not least, the punk rock box sets that Rhino will hopefully be putting out a few years hence. Provided that real experts on punk music are chosen — off the top of my head, I would nominate opinionated nutters such as Byron Coley, Johan Kugelberg, Alan Wright, Brian Devereaux, Jeff Dahl, Chuck Warner, Jello Biafra, Mel Cheplowitz, Mark Brennan, Mike Bastarache, and myself — such a punk rock box set could end up being every bit as stellar as the two "Nuggets" collections.

DOH!

Three issues ago, we published a lecture given by Professor Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi without securing his permission beforehand. We wish to apologize to him for violating established protocol in this instance, especially since we have nothing but respect for his research and admiration for his willingness to tell the truth, even at the risk of incurring the disfavor of certain colleagues.

I mistakenly listed the title of G.G. ALLIN's first LP in my list of the Top 25 punk albums last issue. It should have read: "Always Was, Is, and Always Shall Be".

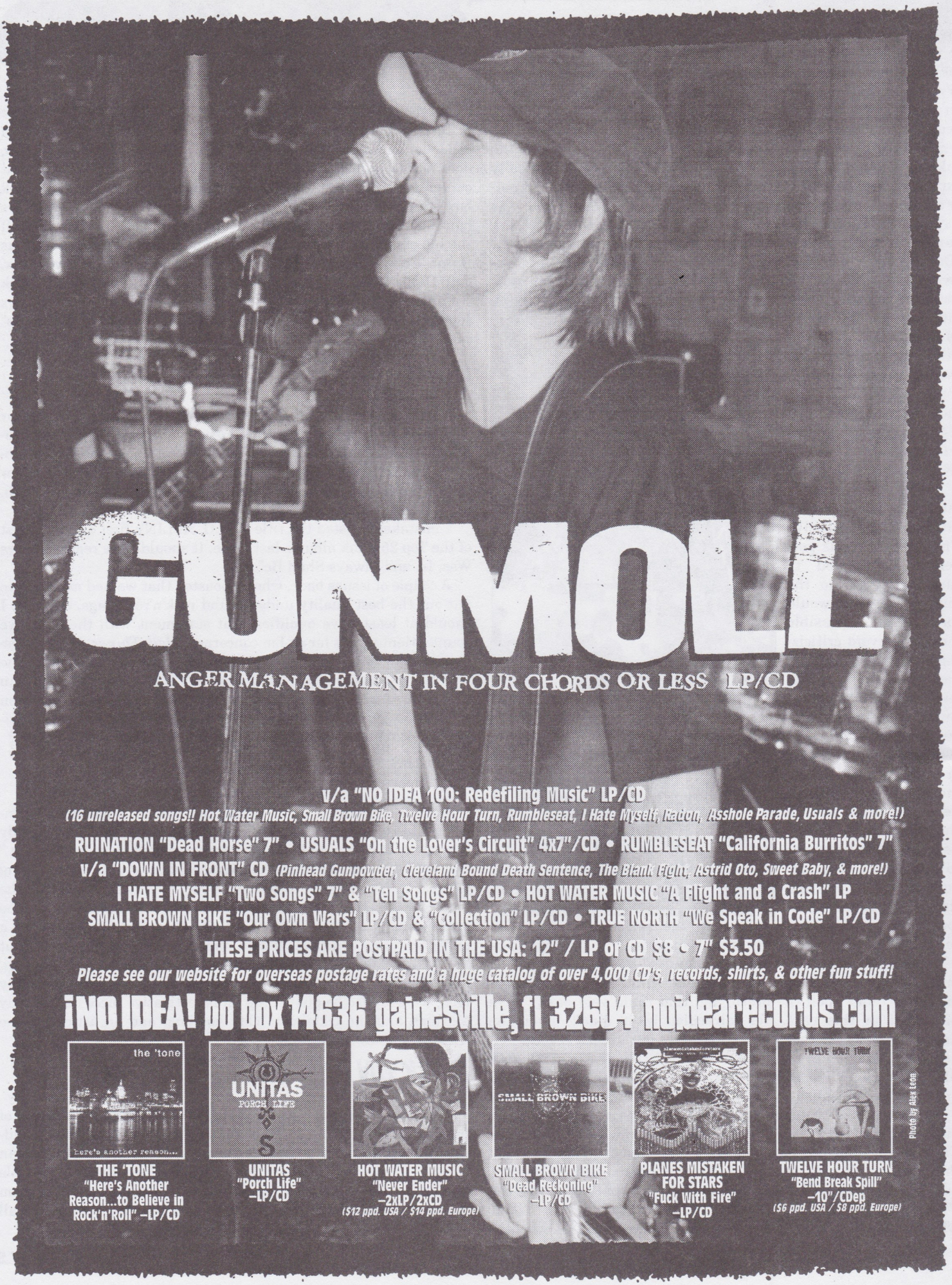
A couple of issues back, when I boasted that we had managed to put out the best quality underground rock'n'roll magazine ever, I should at least have qualified that statement with the adjective "punk-oriented". As far as I'm concerned, *Ugly Things* still sets the standard for rock'n'roll magazines, as one glance at the latest issue (#19) should make clear. (Of course, it's a lot easier to maintain that level of quality when you come out only once a year, but even so...) Great job, Mike, as usual! For those with more eclectic musical tastes, it's awfully hard to match *The Big Takeover*.

NEWS

Next issue, among other things, we will be publishing an in-depth interview with the members of GREEN DAY. I can already hear some of you groaning, and others accusing us of "selling out." But the fact remains that the extraordinary events surrounding GREEN DAY's meteoric career had a very significant impact on the entire punk scene, for better or worse, and this alone justifies the publication of a serious interview with the band (as opposed to a puff piece), one which deals with many controversial matters. But fear not, rockers. IGGY POP and the CULT will also be appearing, respectively, in the next issue and the issue after next. With any luck, we will also be publishing an investigative piece on Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City bombing and an article on the "Beer Olympics" in Atlanta.

ROCK ON (R.I.P.)

Needless to say, we here at *Hit List* were saddened to learn of the deaths of some of our long-standing rock'n'roll heroes, including ultra-primitivist guitar legend Bo Diddley, spooky Bryan Gregory (former guitarist for the CRAMPS), Wim Bieler (erstwhile vocalist for the great Q'65), and Brian Pendleton (original rhythm guitarist for the PRETTY THINGS). Other than Bo, eulogies for all of 'em can be found in the newest *Ugly Things*. ⊕


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Photo by Alex Leon

HIT SQUAD

It's about ten minutes 'til the magazine has to be finished, and I'm sitting down to write a column. This ought to piss off some people in the office *[Don't worry Brett, I've only got about sixty things left to do tonight, as opposed to the one hundred thirty I usually have to do this close to deadline. I forgive you. — Dave]* . So much to say, so little time to convey. I think I'm going to save the majority of it for next issue, but there is one thing that I've been meaning to say for a while. I think that knowledge is priceless, and yet it often comes so cheap. We work in an industry where probably everybody who reads this magazine knows somebody — or is cousins with someone — who owns a record label. It has driven the indie-record industry to a point of overflow and led to mass confusion in the record stores. I *am* quite stoked that more and more people are able to get their music out, and while I personally may not enjoy it, I'm sure that there's someone for every record that is released. The unfortunate backlash of this epidemic is that *way* too many great records get lost in the shuffle, as consumers only stick to what they know — which tends to be bands on bigger labels, who can afford to run national campaigns and cram their band's name down your throat — or time tested bands that they feel safe in picking up new releases by. A lot of times these decisions will land a great new CD in your collection, and again, that's great, but I hate to see so many bands overlooked. I would challenge you as music fans to challenge yourselves. Try to look through record reviews in this — or any other — magazine, and find things that sound interesting to you. I challenge you to mail order, or pick up in a store a title a month that sounds like it might appeal to your likes. If your local stores don't carry the titles that you are looking for, seek out the bands on the Internet, or look into excellent resources like interpunk.com and worldwidepunk.com. You might also want to check out label samplers, or split CDs, allowing you check out multiple bands at once. Most labels offer sampler CDs for $2-$5, which is a great way to get exposed to multiple bands without too much out of your pocket. I hate to sound like I'm standing on a soapbox trying to save Rock & Roll, but the industry is pretty fucked up right now. There are a few bands that do well, but there are thousands more, often times quite superior to the successful bands, that get unjustly overlooked.

I've listed a few bands below from a few different genres of music. These are bands that I have been fortunate enough to find out about, and they have made my musical world a much better place. Please look into these and other bands that you might hear about, and by all means, if you find a gem, please tell a friend.

Hardcore- I'm going to start off with what I consider the most impressive new band I've ever heard. AMERICAN NIGHTMARE are brilliant. Musically along the lines of early JUDGE, or GORILLA BISCUTS, but with a level of brutality and aggression that make the aforementioned bands look like the MR T EXPERIENCE. They have three CD's out (2 on Bridge 9 Records, and a new full length on Equal Vision Records), and you couldn't pick a bad one. Definitely my favorite band right now. You might also want to check out the new BREAKER BREAKER 7" (also on Bridge 9 Records). An early sampling of what is sure to be one of the best bands out there. Strong Gorilla Biscuits / youth crew influences).

Old school Rock & Roll- As Jeff would put it, "if you don't like the HIVES, you don't like Rock & Roll". Lo-fi and full of piss. Great hooks, with a tremendous delivery. (Records on Gearhead Records and Burning Heart). Also check out the BRIEFS (Dirt Nap records). We put them on the cover two issues ago, and we couldn't have been prouder. ADVERTS meets BUZZCOCKS meets THE BOYS meets your stereo. Also check out the new RED PLANET (Gearhead Records). This is a brilliant power pop rock fusion that reeks of '77.

Rock & Roll- I like my rock one of two ways. Either real lo-fi, with an overly trashed out sound, or huge sounding guitars with a production that just seems pushed to the edge. You will find *Hit List* packed to the brim with both of these, so finding a new band to check out shouldn't be too hard. Just to make sure you got your bases covered, I want to mention possibly two of the greatest rock records ever made, at least in my



book. TURBONEGRO's "Apocalypse Dudes" (Man's Ruin Records), which is anthem filled stadium rock at it's best, and LEE HARVEY OSWALD BAND's "Blastronaut" (Touch & Go Records), which is Rick Simms from the DIDJITS, SUPERSUCKERS, and now GAZA STRIPPERS. This was a band that he did as sort of a side project, and while a lot of their records were quite good, this one stands out as the gem. I'm sure since you have the great sense to read this rag you already know about these records, but it's better safe than sorry!

Power Pop- Okay, I'm sorry. This is where I can't bite my tongue any more. Two of the best pop punk records I have ever heard are the TRAVOLTAS "Teenbeat", and the ODD NUMBERS "Trials And Tribulations of..." CDs (both on Coldfront). Yeah, so fucking what if they're on my label? I put them out for a reason, and that's because I back them 100%. I would at *least* recommend that you check them out, as I remember how amazed *I* was when I first heard each of them. (A quick and dirt-cheap way would to be pick up "Not So Quiet On The Coldfront" our latest label sampler — plug plug.) Other amazing records in the power pop genre that have come out lately once again, the latest RED PLANET, and the new INFLUENTS (Adeline). The influents play amazing KINKS-influenced power rock. It's also not hard to hear in their sound that they share a couple of members with PINHEAD GUNPOWDER, whom I'm hoping you already know about.

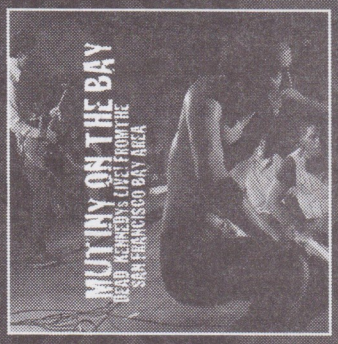
Fast/dark punk rock- The ENEMIES and PITCH BLACK just did a split CD (Lookout!), and it's quite reminiscent of old skate punk, which I miss dearly. The almighty NERVE AGENTS have a new disc out as well. If you are not familiar with them, you might want to check out their last CD, "Days Of The White Owl", as it's probably an easier way to get to know the band, but their new CD, "Butterfly Collection" (see review this issue) is equally as brilliant, and will earn your love.

Just a few ideas. I hope that some of you pick up on my suggestion to take a band you've never heard for a spin. We're all here for a reason — because we love music. Look around, explore, and see what our scene truly has to offer.

Preacher Brett, signing off. ⊕

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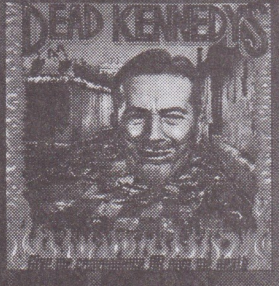
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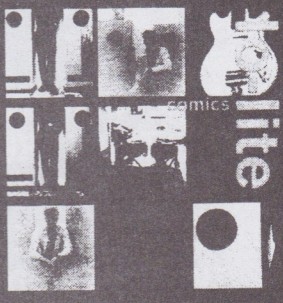
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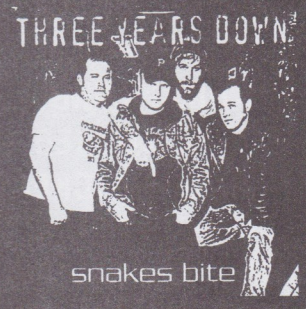




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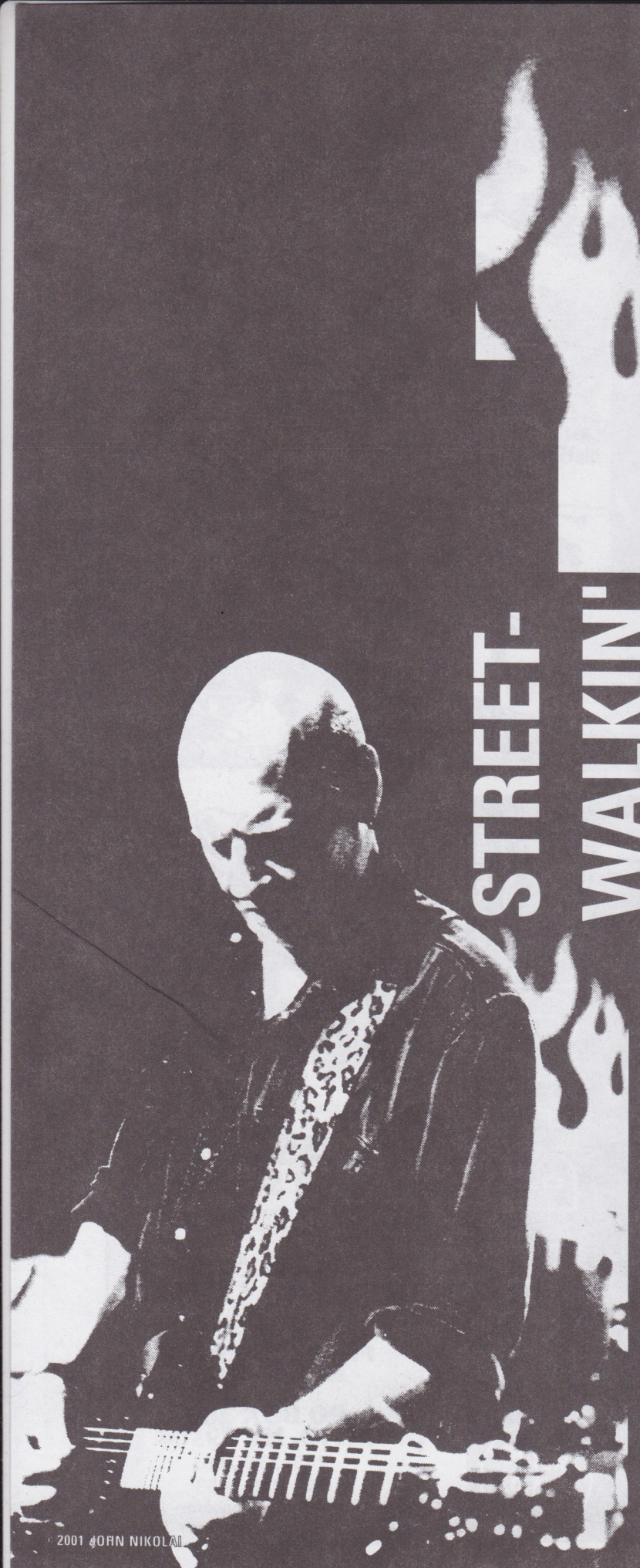
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A CHAT WITH MR. CHEETAH CHROME

BY PHIL OVEREEM

THE FIRST CHURCH OF HOLY ROCK AND ROLL

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GENE O'CONNOR, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS CHEETAH CHROME, HAS BROOKED NO BULLSHIT AS A DYED-IN-THE-WOOL RAWK AND ROLLER. THE SIX-STRING FULCRUM OF TWO LEGENDARY BANDS – ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS, WHO ENVISIONED AN ATTACK WHERE ALL WAS PERMISSIBLE AND NOTHING FORBIDDEN, AND THE DEAD BOYS, WHO LOOKED INTO THE VOID, WHIRLED AND, SNICKERING, UNLOADED INTO IT – CHEETAH HAS SURVIVED THE WORST AND CONTINUES TO GENERATE HOLY CLATTER. I WAS FORTUNATE TO BE ABLE TO VOLLEY A FEW QUESTIONS INTO HIS COURT RECENTLY, PARTICULARLY SINCE A CERTAIN EAST VILLAGE RAG HAD POSTED HIS OBITUARY. UPON BEING RESURRECTED, HERE'S WHAT HE SPIKED BACK OUR WAY:

Phil: What first struck the spark of rock and roll in your soul?

Cheetah: Believe it or not, seeing the Beatles on Ed Sullivan was what made me want to play. I got a really shitty little guitar for Christmas after bugging my mom forever, and that was it. What inspired me to play lead was the guitar sound on "Born to Be Wild," which still really kicks ass, by the way.

Phil: Didja have any classic rock and roll rebel experiences in school?

Cheetah: Just the whole thing with the long hair,which used to be a VERY big deal, a bit (!!!!) of experimentation with drugs, sex, all the typical teenage shit.

Phil: How'd you come to get involved with the other guys in Rocket from the Tombs?

Cheetah: I had been playing with Johnny Blitz in cover bands for a few years, and we happened to see an ad in the paper for a guitarist and drummer into the Stooges, Velvets, etc. We were into all that stuff, but Alice Cooper was our bread and butter. I hooked up with Peter at a little bar in the garment district in Cleveland; we talked and then set up a jam. I think that Crocus, being an art fag, was a little put off by us, but Peter was quite impressed. RFTT had been thought of as a joke until then!

Phil: There's so much tension in that band's music between art and trash. How'd you manage to hold things together long enough to make the few record-ings you did? Thomas sez you all could agree on the MC5/Stooges, but I don't notice you quoted much. And did that really cause the band to break apart, y'know, like in a "High Noon" showdown between the brutes and the brains?

Cheetah: Talk about tension – Crocus (who, by the way, I DID like) had a great sense of humor, but he could be very condescending,and he really didn't have much patience for us young upstarts. He took himself quite seriously as an "artist." I mean, how else could he wind up playing that little metal bar with that little silver hammer in Pere Ubu? How fucking precious!!! The reason you never saw me quoted was because we were the kids, and Peter and Crocus were the "creative nucleus." The break-up was not what I would call a showdown, just a long, drawn-out drag!

Phil: With over a quarter of a century of perspective, how do you feel about those recordings? If you take the best of the Dead Boys' first two albums and combine it with the hot shit on Ubu's first EP and album (all of 'em ex-RFTT things), it seems to me that you have one of the all-time in-your-face rock and roll albums.

Cheetah: I agree, but oh, well!

Phil: Any chance the RFTT stuff will see legit release?

Cheetah: I doubt it. None of us speak to each other, and the master tapes, which are 25-year-old 2-tracks, are most likely dust by now. Plus, I haven't done much business with "art fags" since Rocket. They really do get on my last nerve.

Phil: Laughner's usually seen as either a genius or a crafty dilettante. What's your take?

Cheetah: I really would have to say both. Not to avoid a real answer, but he really was. Looking back, I'd say that Peter was very naive – I mean, he died when he was 23!! – and almost as idealistic as I was. He was a big fish in a small pond in Cleveland, and had the sycophants to prove it. Half of them later played in one version or another of Pere Ubu! He sure could play guitar, though, and to this day is one of my biggest influences.



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DEAD BOYS



ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS

Phil: What was more fun: being part of a visionary group of program-fuckers that barely anybody got a chance to see, or being in a band of major-label bad boys who are maybe more infamous for their behavior than their music?

Cheetah: It felt really good to be rockin' again! The Rockets had no clue that we were visionary program-fuckers at the time, and the DB's were much more of a band, mentality-wise and musicianship-wise. The major-label bad boys part was, of course, a complete blast! I guess I probably need to point out that at that time (1977) Sire was NOT a major label. They had few acts besides the Ramones, and their claim to fame up till then had been this Dutch band Focus, who had that song "hocus pocus" with the guy yodeling. I can only assume they fired their talent scout before '77! In '76 or '77, Seymour Stein started buying up all the punk bands he could, looking for the next Ramones (or rather, looking for tax write-offs FOR the Ramones). We were "lucky" enough to be one of them. The asshole still does this, and wrecks a lot of what could be decent careers with his little development deal scam. Anyway, in the midst of our first tour, Sire became a subsidiary of Warner Brothers, which was a major label, so the next thing we know we've got these doofus A&R guys at all of our shows, setting up in-store appearances, radio interviews, and shoving "toot" up our waiting noses. This also brought what's known as tour support, so we got to stay in decent places and eat a few times a week. Hell, sometimes we could even buy beer and cigarettes! We never got to be "rich rock stars" per se, but we had plenty of press, the girls loved us, all the dealers wanted to hang with us, and we couldn't walk down the street in damn near any city without being recognised. We could also destroy hotel rooms, dressing rooms, rental cars, etc., and Sire or our manager would get us out of it or pay for it. Just the thing for five like-minded juvenile delinquents like ourselves! What if we were to appear today? My guess is that we'd die the death and be overshadowed by morons with black contact lenses and lead singers who wear baseball caps and can't play their fucking guitars. Plus, I'm proud to say that not one Dead Boy could rap worth a shit, nor would we have wanted to, so that would be another strike against us. Nah, unfortunately, instead of changing things to the point where the criteria that record companies used to sign acts changed, the kids figured that anybody who could wear a safety pin in his nose had a right to a million dollar contract after two guitar lessons! From what I hear these days, we played too well, cared too much, and dressed too cool to ever make it in today's market.

Phil: You obviously had some wild experiences in those days, serving time at CBGBs, fighting Sid Vicious, having Belushi in your rhythm section after Blitz was stabbed, bartending with Keith Richards, being trailed by the CIA, traveling (I assume) in the same orbit as Dee Dee, Thunders, Bangs, and of course Stiv. Please elaborate.

Cheetah: Well, back then it really was a pretty special time. There was still a little bit of 60's optimism in the air, there was no AIDS, and there was a big feeling in the punk movement that you BELONGED to something that just might change things.

Music didn't suck quite as much as it had in the previous few years, and there was a sense of community in NYC that was very inspiring. This, of course, was before it all degenerated into "hardcore", and the kids sat around being "straight edge" or hung out in abandoned buildings bitching about how everything sucked, all the while NOT having sex, NOT learning how to play an instrument, NOT drinking or taking drugs, eating out of dumpsters, and going to see other like-minded schmucks and slamming into them – no wonder they thought life sucked! I've got way too many stories about that time to even begin and try to type them all, plus I've got a gig in a week, and my fingers won't recover by then! Suffice it to say that it was a great time. I got to hang with a lot of my personal idols, and also made some new ones. I'll cover all this in detail when I write my life story.

Phil: The Dead Boys haven't really gotten a fair shake from the rockwrite clan. What's your take on rock criticism in general, and the band's legacy?

Cheetah: They never liked us, never. But to this day there is a continuing interest in what the band did, and I'm proud to say that a lot of kids picked up guitars because of me – I talk to a couple at almost every one of my shows! It's always been my opinion that you really aren't qualified to judge someone else's work unless you are capable of doing as well, or preferably better, yourself. In my experience very few critics canmeet that criteria, so FUCK 'EM!

Phil: Any comments on Guns n' Roses' cover of "Ain't It Fun" ? Didja see any $$ from their recording, or meet 'em?

Cheetah: The Gunners? Their version of "Ain't It Fun" was very faithful to the original, nothing earthshaking, but real good. I did get to hang with Slash and Duff a bit, both of whom are great guys, and was only subjected to Axl Rose twice (thank God). I did get paid handsomely, since they are very honest gentlemen (unlike Pearl Jam). I am therefore very grateful to them.

Phil: As a survivor of heavy substance abuse, how do you look back on it? No regrets? Ray Charles has always said he's never regretted being a junkie. On the other hand, Lou Reed (though he's a little stuffy), Steve Earle (though he's taking himself too seriously again) and George Jones (very intermittently) have done great post-addiction work, whereas guys like Stinson and Thunders ran into the wall. I'm also interested to know if you think, had Thunders been able to clean up, that he coulda written more songs instead just doing the same ol' same ol' over and over again, great as it was. Is substance-induced flight from oneself necessary to great rock and roll?

Cheetah: Drugs? If anything, they might be necessary to the musician, but they aren't necessary to R&R, not one bit!

Phil: Lots of folks may have lost touch with your post-Dead Boys career. What were the highlights? And what are you up to now?

Cheetah: I would have to say the coolest things I've done since the DB's would have to be working with Jeff Dahl, who is always very professional and a lot of fun (especially "I Kill Me"), and the Ghetto Dogs (both lineups).The Sonny Vincent CD with Captain Sensible and Scotty Asheton was alright, but in my opinion it could have been a lot better considering the personnel on it. I did do a complete album's worth of material in 1996 with Genya Ravan (*YL&Snotty* producer) for my first solo CD, but due to some legal disagreement with the record company that hasn't seen the light of day yet. We'll see what happens with that. Right now I'm rehearsing my band to tour behind the new CD here in Nashville. The new line up is: Cheetah Chrome, guitar and vocal Pat Albert, guitar Andy Zachary, bass Matt Bach, drums We're doing stuff from the new CD, some DB's, some RFTT, and some new stuff nobody's heard yet!

Phil: What are the biggest challenges when "the guitarist" goes solo?

Cheetah: You mean besides having to learn to sing and play at the same time? Finding a recognizable band name without the word "featuring" in it, for one. Not working with chick singers is another, since for some reason that always seems to happen. Not bitching about yer old bandmates, there's another one! There are plenty of challenges out there for erstwhile guitarists, you bet!

Phil: How are you liking Nashville? Do you ever miss Cleveland?

Cheetah: Nashville is really cool, since everybody and their brother is in the music business. There's also still an economy that "W" hasn't fucked up, and the scenery is great! There is a pretty strong little rock and roll scene here, lots of indie bands, and you can get a three-bedroom house with an acre of land for what you pay for a broom closet in NYC. I never even think of Cleveland. It might be cool now, but it wasn't when I grew up there, and I've pretty much always hated it. But I hear it's improved a lot in the past ten or so years.

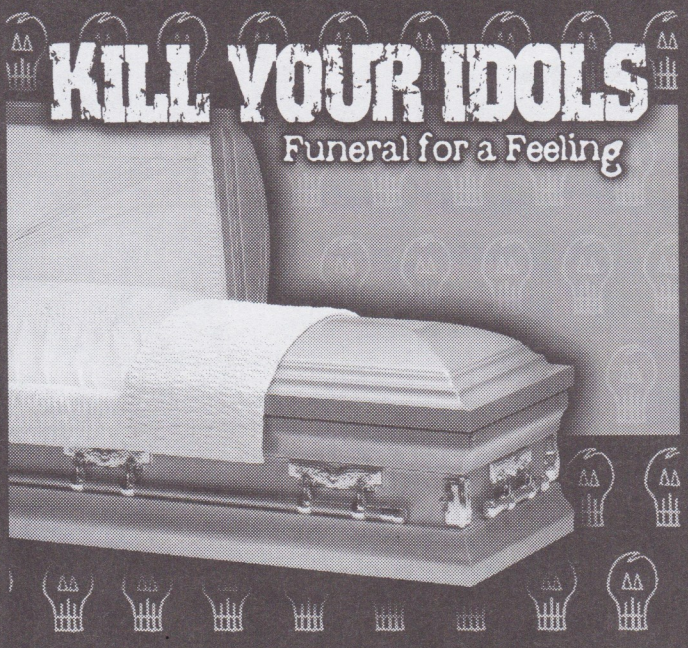
Phil: Most career rockers are pretty disgusted with the state of American music today. Is it really that much different from when RFTT was in its prime?

Cheetah: What do I think of music today? It's mostly shit! It does remind me of the days before Rockets and the DBs, or the early 80's, when there was nothing but hardcore and heavy metal. I guess somebody needs to rebel against all this new "punk" junk like Blink 182. Limp Bizkit just need to be shot in the head; I like the Backstreet Boys better than them. Hopefully R&R can recover from this dry spell, but with that fucking little pipsqueak in the White House I doubt it will get the chance. It's all about $$$, now more than ever, so anything of real value will never get the distribution it needs to make a difference.

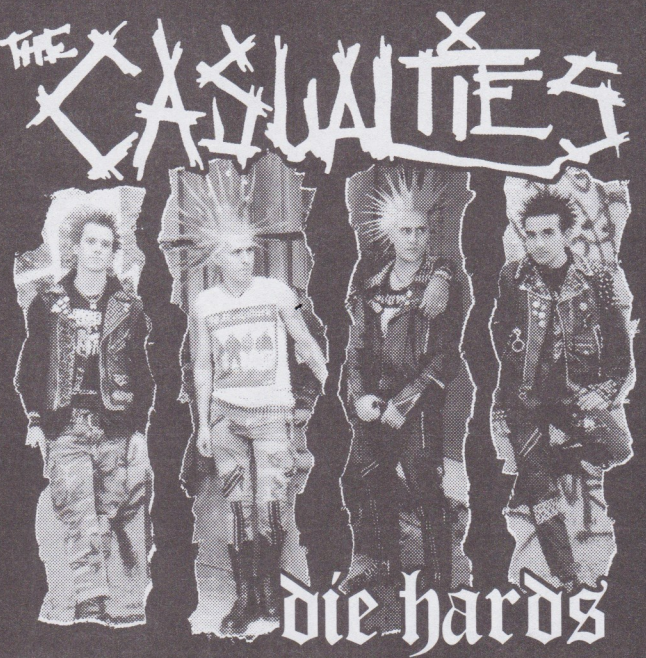
Phil: What have you been listening to lately?

Cheetah: A lot of same stuff I listened to before I was in the DB's, like Alex Harvey, the Stooges, the MC5, Cockney Rebel, the Stones, the Beatles, Dylan, Zep. I do love Clawhammer a lot, and the Foo Fighters aren't bad. I was really sad to see Kurt Cobain die, since Nirvana was probably the only real hope that punk had, but the only influence they had that I've really noticed was on Bush, who kinda suck! The newest CD I bought was the new Mark Knopfler solo, but I don't play it that much. Here and there you might hear something good, but it's few and far between. The Cult are playing here Sunday, so there's finally something to look forward to!

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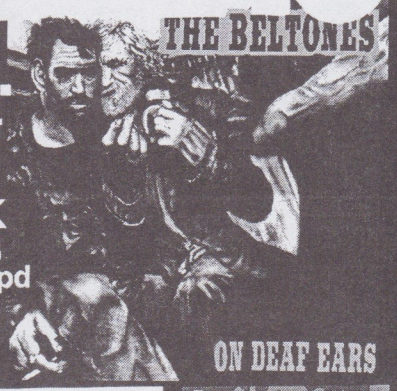
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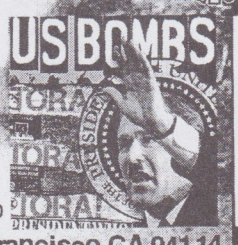
BELTONES

BACK FROM THE DEAD...

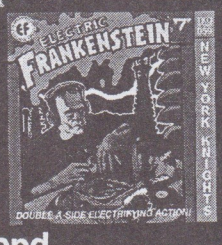
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"You did not have to leave me in tears..." (-Paul K.)

HOODLUM THUNDER

Word on the street is my man IGGY POP'S back with a vengence, having finally rebounded from his divorce tribulations that had him sadly sulkin' in those unbecoming mid-life dumps.Thank God! My ace bro Ricki Dee caught Ig's live show up in Detroit last week, and said it renewed his faith in real rock'n'roll. Apparently, Iggy's even worked out a bunch of angry new songs with his leeching-delinquent guitarist, Whitey, that reportedly rock shit-crazy. I wish I had his new record to listen to today - I could really benefit from the shot in the arm. It's a glimmery Saturday afternoon, I've been sitting on my rotting sundeck in my tiny backyard full of birds, half-heartedly reading some library books, dreamily trying to write a new song, dreading work tonight, and waiting for my young son to wake up so we can take the kids to Eden Park. Everything should be glorious - my children are little wonders, my girl's a stone cold fox, but something in my ungrateful heart's not in the present. I'm glum as fuck. I need more pickle and relish...Slowly surrendering to this soulless suburban fast food 'n' slow livin' paycheck mediocrity is just killin' my spirit.

The felonious drummer's been outta jail for over a month now, but he's still caught-up in trying to reclaim a half-assed smalltown life for himself up North, forever delaying all my dreams and schemes of convening all my reckless merry-makers in the motor city (http://community.webtv.net/i94rec/I94Recordings) to finally record some more of our watermelon-flavored, hard pop/rock-candy anthems. So I'm just listening to the Junk Monkeys and trying to appreciate the butterflies and blue skies, but I'm stuck here in this loveless city where we have zero social-support and none of my champagne wishes are gonna come true. And this kinda weather starts workin' on my alcoholic's euphoric recall, bringin' back all those illusory memories of good times gone, when me and my old gang still had an extensive record collection, a shitty stereo system, a blender, a bag of ice, some lawn-chairs, and beatup acoustic guitars, a band house in the ghetto, and the best years of our lives still ahead of us. I miss the freedom and the glory of my lost youth. The impervious, impenetrable self-belief...and while I'm loathe to invite the chaos of my chemical summers back into the lives of my children, I'm really tired of eating smalltown shit, cowering in the suburbs, sniveling in the shadows. I'm a broken record, a dull razor, an old guitar that no one strums, the Last of the last of the last of the last, and how much more, babies, can you ask?

"Old friend, young & new, what'll I do when you're gone, too."
-(Generation X)

"I used to dream & used to vow / I wouldn't dream of it now"
-(Morrissey)

Turn this up and shut the door, we're not 16 anymore. All my merry men are married, buried, twice-divorced with restraining orders, drinking themselves to death on S.S.I., or just stoned and dethroned, squeezed into seclusion. Even my courageous, longtime comrade,the International Snake-Charmer and Depraved Sex-Hun Ken McIntyre, the Sleazegrinder, is taking the plunge into domesticity and getting married to a beautiful starlette on September 1st. The Dwindling Party's a hard act to follow, 'cause there's no



tomorrow on this road of sorrows...Congratulations, brother. I'll be there with belles on. Myself? I'm still just waiting for this one someone, and standing right here in the flames, chewing gum.

BABY, IF YOU EVER WONDERED, WONDERED WHATEVER BECAME OF ME...

"Obscenity is worse than war."
-(Charles Keating)

"You drive us wild, we'll drive you crazy..."
-(KISS)

The repressed right-wingers and religious fanatics of Cincinnati have long been notorious for their over-zealous anti-smut crusading, their relentless war against "bad words" and "dirty pictures". Tirelessly campaigning against Flynt or Mapplethorpe or "naughty bookstores", they say, "to protect our children." And yet...they're never outraged by "our children's" blood being spilt in the streets, or by this vulgar culture of authoritarianism, censorship, intolerance, violence and incarceration they've perpetuated here. Marksman cops intentionally shooting black children, even with these so-called beanbag bullets, and unarmed suspects being shot dead, are obscene. Multiple deaths of people in police custody, most of whom happen to be black, is obscene. Cops firing "bean bag missiles" and chemical irritants indiscriminately into crowds of protesters to oppress dissent, injuring innocents, women and children, is obscene. City Council Office-holders, news journalists, television anchormen, and vain "got mine" yuppies and former punx, who

allow and encourage this kind of policing are obscene. Insincere, smartass, wise-guy poseurs who trade in rock'n'roll iconography, but secretly appreciate the silencing of countervailing ideaologies are particularly obscene. Consensual adult sex? I'd call that, um, nature.

Recently in Censornati, they've hassled more adult bookstore owners, and the rich attorney who owns the Esquire, the indie/art-house film theatre, has taken to editing sexual scenes arbitrarily out of the films that he shows there, doing right-wing, strong-arm "community standards" Sheriff Simon Leis' work for him.

DISORDERLY CONDUCT & RESISTING ARREST

If the cops in Cincinnazi don't like your clothes, you can be arrested for "disorderly conduct and resisting arrest". This is what they randomly arrest people for if they don't like the looks of ya - or appreciate your suspected political views. The "resisting" part comes in when you squirm while being maced at point blank range after being handcuffed. All true. Business As Usual. All that bull-shit they told you in school about freedom and human rights are often only enjoyed by certain people - the rich, their lackeys, and those cowards among us who stand by and do nothing, hoping that their silence will keep them warm and safe.

LET FREEDOM RING, MOTHERFUCKERS...

When between 200 and 300 demonstrators showed up in Fountain Square to protest the C.E.O. "secret society" meeting here, cops turned out in full paramilitary regalia with their shot-guns brandished menacingly, arbitrarily sweeping through the crowd, arresting 52 protesters for randomly made-up violations. The local public defender then advised everyone to plead no contest, accepting jive plea-bargains; but those who held out for justice, doing time in jail for legally speaking their beliefs, were all exonerated when, case after case, their charges were dismissed.The arrests were illegitimate maneuvers, fascist-style scare tactics to discourage protest. The police were instructed to silence dissent on behalf of these shadowy organizations using whatever tools necessary. Shades of things to come. All this is common knowledge and well-documented, but self-obsessed white Cincinnatians, like the creepy talk-show hosts of city council, seem to feel that those "rabble rousing commies" probably "deserved" to have their freedom wrongfully taken away from them - merely for expressing unpopular beliefs in this very indoctrinated, conservative, ultra-programmed part of the country. It would seem that expressing concern for one's country or planet with sidewalk chalk and homemade drums are offenses that justify the use of force in this town. It's crazy.

When another "Constitutionally Guaranteed" demonstration was scheduled to take place here in Cincinnati on June second, the police (Lt. Col.Richard Jancke, Chief Streicher) actually issued a chilling press release promising to "make use of all available tools" to terrorize the demonstrators, including "chemical irritants, bean bag ammo, and lethal force". Hard to believe? It was quoted verbatim on the right-wing Rupert Murdoch-owned Fox 19 ten o' clock news. This shit doesn't even sound real - does it? Standing up for your beliefs in this city has many dangerous consequences. My prayers and admiration are with those courageous, defiant souls who proactively resist this insidious culture of abuse and control.
I also found it noteworthy that the baby-boomer yuppies of Mt. Adams' pretentiously named boutique,"Visionarie Art In Action", applauded the cops' efforts to keep truth-telling out of their nauseatingly privileged, rich-sold-out-hippies-oriented, pristine, hilltop bubble. All those goddamn Bob Dylan and Bob Marley fans on top of that hill who get all weepy and sentimental when they hear the FACES song on their new car commercials are happy sell-outs who suffer no stigmas or self-awareness. Disgraceful pot-smoking, glass-blowing, artsy hypocrites!

People who see abuse of authority, ugly violence, hypocrisy, and injustice, but fearful, take no stand against these problems, are guilty by complicity. Repeated beatings at the hands of the jock trendies and testosterone-drunk bouncers of Clifton have taught me firsthand the consequences of going against the prevailing flow in this town. It's really hard to stand up when you know they'll pummel you back down. "Battle Ye Not with Monsters, Lest Ye Become One..." Sometimes ya gotta say "What the fuck?" though, y'know? Even if you know that confronting the powerful is likely to get you hurt. I will always fight for freedom, but I'm trying to get wiser about how I select my battles.

What if you and me and all of our friends started withdrawing our complicity from the creeping global "police state" and sharing information and resources and uplifting one another? I dunno what our tiny efforts could accomplish. I still believe in the power of the individual(s). Even when I'm denied access to any reasonable, viable means of survival in this small town because of my beliefs and appearance and class and former lifestyle, I won't crap out. I know we gotta persevere and think for ourselves, and also help educate each other so that we can make a little difference. I'm starting to read instead of watching that wicked TV ("His Master's Voice"). and hope to buy a copy machine to resume my publishing and trading of ideas and support with other zine publishers in the near future. I also dream of someday building a recording studio where authentic and impassioned voices can record for free. All these producers and studio owners and labels supposedly dig my music so much (the Last of the Real Pop-Rock Super Heroes, America's Most Dangerous Sweethearts, DIMITRI MONROE & THE NAKED FLAMES), but no one has yet offered to help pay to get it produced or foot the recording bill, so you start to question their sincerity, especially when these same lame checkbooks are puttin' out all these sophomoric punk rehash bands.

I know I'll be accused by some other misanthropic curmudegeon for sounding too hippyish and utopian, but I really feel certain that all us outlaw underdog freaks and real punk street urchins and whisky-bent rock'n'roll freedom fighters have got to stop competing and start working together if we want anything to get better. Freedom begins at home, babies. I'm gonna find a way to build a recording studio that's for music, not for profit. And when I figure out how, I'm gonna come right back here and teach you how, too. (www.freespeech.org)

I really want to move my family out of this city, love it or leave it, y'know? But my oldest son's mother lives here, and I need to remain a strong presence in his life. It's a profound moral dilemma. A tiger trap. My first priority is taking care of my own, and we gotta stick together no matter what the weather. The most common and costly mistake poor people make is in not staying the distance together - bands, couples, friends, parents. If you're ever gonna be a pirate king, first, ya gotta be willing to go down with the ship. When you're a Jet, you're a Jet all the way. I just know we'd be

allowed to thrive and enjoy a lot more opportunities in other communities where some other people share more of our ideas about what it means to be a human being. And about rock'n'roll.

RECORD COLLECTORS ARE INDEED PRETENTIOUS ASSHOLES

I had a fellow rocker/musician/and 'zine publisher say to me recently how he doesn't ever wanna be one of those parasitical music journalist/bottom-feeders who are always begging people for free review copies (like me), but he's in a more fortunate economic position than many of us. Here's the bottom-line, the awful truth. If somebody wants me to hear their music, they're gonna have to send me a promo or make me a tape. The last CD I can remember buying was like, fuck, "Munki", by the Jesus & Mary Chain or Joe Strummer's "X-Ray Style", used, and that was a long while back. New major label CDs are $18 with like, pennies going to the artist , so I simply don't ever pay that much for a CD. I buy all my stuff used, so the most I'm looking to ever spend is around $8-10, which is seldom 'cause I'm really, really poor. Let's say I've got $10 to spend on a CD. Who the fuck am I supposed to buy?

If somebody wants me to hear their music, they're gonna have to send me a promo or make me a tape.

The new DOGS D'AMOUR? The SABRE-JETS? The CULT? The GO-GO'S? CHERRY 13? BROTHER WAYNE KRAMER'S MAD FOR THE RACKET or "Beyond Cyber-Punk" compilation with JIMMY ZERO'S new group, LESBIANMAKER? NUTRAJET? JEFF DAHL? The DEVIANTS? DAVE KUSWORTH? The ROCKET-TEENS? The DRAGONS? That DARLINGS CD on Bomp that I've only ever heard one song off of? The LOW & SWEET ORCHESTRA? The CRUEL SEA? NICK CAVE? I've read some reviews of the DIAMOND DOGS that compared them to the LONDON QUIREBOYS and the FACES, my all-time faves...Will I ever be able to afford the new NINA ANTONIA-penned JOHNNY THUNDERS book, or the ANDY McCOY documentary? IAN HUNTER'S new record,"Rant"? Or TEX PERKINS and SPENCER JONES records imported from Australia for $35? Just 'cause I don't have a credit-card to buy 'em with online? (Right now I'm mostly listening to mellow old man shit, "Dad Rock" like the DIRTY THREE, GUY CLARK, JOHN PRINE, the GO-BETWEENS, EDWYN COLLINS, the BOTTLE ROCKETS, JAYHAWKS, LEONARD COHEN, the LEMONHEADS, WHISKEYTOWN, and AZTEC CAMERA. All the poncey middle-of-the-road pop or insurgent-country or acoustic shit that sounded too pussy-ish when I was a shitfaced, punk-nosed snot who only related to like, Poison Idea and the Action Swingers.) And like, the SEA HAGS.

Or do I risk feeling ripped-off buying some young new band I've never heard before who are current darlings of the underground press? Or do I buy some tried and true album I loved in the past but lost in the course of these last few, lean and mean years? See?! I'm already in a depressing consumer-frenzy! I wish I could find a good job...poverty sucks. (By the way, the singer from the BEATINGS has the most extraordinary line of custom-made rock'n'roll t-shirts I've ever fucking seen, at www.thebeatings.com, but the odds of me coming up with $15 for six used cassettes of 80's new wave and metal bands is a lot greater than 'me ever coming up with $20, mailing it, and waiting for a t-shirt, but he makes SMACK and MATERIAL ISSUE and TIGERTAILZ and HANOI ROCKS shirts, and he's a wonderful artist, so check his shit out. The BEATINGS oughta go on tour with the MYSTERY ADDICTS and the DISARRAY GUNS!

Mostly, what I've had to resort to is going to the library and checking out cool classic rock discs like, you know ,old R & B and GRAM PARSONS and the ANIMALS and 80's New Wave compilations, and geting my out-of-town friends to make me compilation tapes, and every great once in awhile, like every three or four months, maybe I'll blow $15 on a half a dozen used cassettes from Half Priced Books, usually stuff I used to own on vinyl, because that way I get the most bang for my buck. When I hear people rattling on and on about their disposable incomes and antique jukeboxes and collector's vinyl buying sprees, I guess I'm supposed to be green with envy, but I've just had to gradually adjust my expectations and needs over the years and now, for the most part, I'm just as happy with a cassette dub of some album I love as with the gatefold sleeve, numbered, special limited-edition, import-only, picture-disc, Japanese-fanclub, out-of-print EP with special bonus tracks, lyric sheet and a glow-in-the-dark-skateboard-sticker, anyway. 'Cause at this point, for me, it's all about the song. I've never been one of those elitist shit hoarders, claiming to be fans, who brag about their precious collections but who never turn the lowly have-nots onto their preciously inaccessible sounds, preferring to gloat selfishly about what they have that you'll never see or hear. To me, those guys ain't rock'n'rollers, they're just dickheads...I can't stand fucking shit hoarders. Shit hoarders, fuck right off! You know who you are - among other people, all the geeks in bowling shirts who wrecked that hotel at the "Las Vegas Garage" thing last year.

But then, there are cats like my pal TOM SHANNON from the CHEATER SLICKS, who has a dusty house full of hard-won vintage records and who absolutely delights in making tapes for people and turning them onto cool and obscure stuff. He's an avid collector, but he's more like a librarian, a torch-keeper, a guardian of cool, preserving all this rock arcana affectionately, who generously clued me in on much of my fave stuff, from the Scientists to George Jones and Buck Owens to the Pretty Things. Right on. Thanks For Being My Brotha, Tom. I love ya. Incidentally, the CHEATER SLICKS are goin' back into the studio soon, accompanied by Hollywood Bob Starker of SOVINES fame and some shit-hot producer who's worked with the Stones, the Cramps, the Replacements, Mudhoney, Alex Chilton, etc. I can't wait to hear the results.

Anyway, if you want to hip me to your group's music, you can

contact me about sending your promo materials for review in my inky, infrequent, rock'n'roll rant-rags, by e-mailing BurntoutRecluse@aol.com . Badass rock'n'roll I've heard lately that carries the full-on J.D.MONROE Seal Of Approval: BEBE BUELL, SONNY VINCENT, AMERICAN HEARTBREAK, BACKYARD BABIES, TYLA, JOHN EASDALE, NASH KATO, THE SCARECROWS, NOVA EXPRESS, THE FLESHTONES, CHEETAH CHROME, THE CULT, THE GUTTER QUEENS (HAR!HAR!), THE TRASH BRATS, SPENCER JONES, THE CRUEL SEA, TEX PERKINS, KIM SALMON & THE SURREALISTS, THE BEASTS OF BOURBON, THE CHICKENHAWKS, ALISON GORDY, VERUCA SALT, TEENAGE FRAMES, THE DRAGONS, WHIPPING BOY, JEFF DAHL, TIPSY, & SOUR JAZZ.

The TRASH BRATS, L.E.S. STITCHES, and the MALAKAS are touring through your town this summer. Do the right thing and make 'em feel at home, alrite? Oh yeah, I took my soul-sister Phoebe Legere's advice and finally started checking some shit out on mp3.com. Former CIRCUS OF POWER crooner Alex Mitchell has some badass psychotronic biker swamp rock on there called SHOW-BIZ AL & THE SPACE WARRIORS. Ricky Beck Mahler, phone home.

SOMETHING IS BROKEN IN THE PROMISED LAND....

While everybody I know is scrambling desperately just to barely survive, Viagra spokesmodel and Pepsi pitch-man SEN. BOB DOLE and his rich grey peers have drummed up over 160 MILLION DOLLARS, an incomprehensible sum of money, to ERECT another war monument to veterans of the Second World War. Now I got some good friends and sacred-beloved family members who fought in that war and I respect and appreciate them with all my heart, but I don't necessarily agree that that kinda money oughta be spent on a war memorial when millions and millions of people are suffering, hungry, sick, homeless, wrongly imprisoned, and living like dogs here and all over the world. But obviously, Washington doesn't give a rat's ass about how you or I might feel regarding anything, being as how we're not billionaire special interests, war profiteers, or international corporations. One advantage Bob and the boys are happy about is that there might not be room for anymore of those pesky Million Man Marches or civilian demonstrations when they "get it up", the monument that is, on the national mall in Washington. If the "Greatest Generation" was fighting WWII to preserve the cause of freedom and humanity, why don't we do something to support those aims with all that money in their name? Like Washington needs more fucking statues.

LUNATIC FRINGE DANCIN' & THERE ISN'T ANY DOOR...

Somedays, here in my lonesome, 12-step drop-out abstinence, I don't even know who I am no more. I'm so completely cut-off from the neon-lit night-time world I knew. Mister Carpet Burn? Who's He? Any relation to Mister Unhealth? Everybody loved my evil alter-ego, but I got up from the barstool for 15 minutes, and now I'm the lonely planet boy - it's fucking weird. It still feels like a lot of people in my geographical sphere are caught-up in playin' out a real-life version of "Survivor". Me - I ain't forging no crafty alliances out here, so I'll always be the first one voted off the island. "The tribe has spoken". I know I stand alone. But hell, I don't really want relationships that are like chess games. Here in the Republican suburbs, in the middle-age wasteland, it's all a race for gold. Status-Seeking. Power-Tripping. All the upper-class squares fantasize about being poor and dangerous rock'n'roll cowboys, while us white-trash outcasts wish we had access to studio-time, easy livin', and steady incomes like the rich and supposedly "popular" ones ,and therein lies much of my local conflict. Of course, I'm familiar with all the arguments about Brian Jones and Gram Parsons and half my fav'rites being from wealthy backgrounds, it just annoys me when those people seem to imply that their access was earned, based on their talent, rather than being primarily purchased by their families.

Recently, I had a girl tell me there was obviously something wrong with my psychological development, because what I value, my core beliefs, have nothing to do with consolidating economic power or lording over others. I'm only into music and art, laughter and singing. My children and friends. Love and hope and sex and dreams...Nick Kent and Nick Drake. Arthur Lee and old *Smash Hits* magazines, bongo drums and tiki torches, harmonicas, purple bikinis, spontaneous roadtrips, Paul K. & the Prayers, and Snake Dog Ale...Big Star and Duran Duran. FREEDOM, BABY, FREEDOM. Whereas, like so many in this era, she likes to compete, she lives for the perfect halter top, and she has found a system to insure she always gets it. Good for her! Like Kid Creole once sang,"I will never be like Endicott..."

These tiny tyrants and mini-moguls here are just so unimaginative and completely duped by the culture of control and consumerism that they're inevitably really threatened by anyone who won't beg to join their rank and file. Even if we can't beat the system, let's not let the system beat us.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE TEENAGE DREAM?

The paychecks who are currently employed to sell you manufactured pop shite like the White Stripes and Delta '72, No Doubt and O-Town, Wyclef Jean and Rob Thomas, continue to appall me. Smarmy *Rolling Stone* hack Rob Sheffield basically celebrates everything I stand in opposition to in every single issue. And gets paid for it. I'm always broke so I check *RS* out of the library to keep up on Scott Weiland and Zach De la Rocha. One of Sheffield's latest columns is about how groovy it is that Puff Daddy's "Lolita" girl group, Dream, are being decked out in T.Rex and Johnny Thunders t-shirts by overpaid hipster-stylists, which he thinks is really kool. Rick Johnson and J. Kordosh, where are you when we really need you? There are dozens of overpriced glossy rock mags, but they're all full of trendy, phony lies and trustfunded bullshit.

There's virtually no real rock'n'roll press left in America aside from *Hit List*, which is mostly great because of Sleazegrinder (who makes stoner-rock seem almost appealing!) and Rockin' Jeff Bale (loved his piece on the California Dream!), and IN SPITE of the sissy emo and cowboy-hatted Rev.Horton Heat/The Nuge-influenced redneck punkmetal shysters. *Flipside* folded. *Motorbooty* folded. *Pop Smear* folded. *Big Takeover* is great, but maybe a little dry and academic. *Carbon 14* is pretty good, but a little too much on the hipster-chic, eightballs, and hotrods side of town for my taste, y'know what I mean? The slick underground rag for people

DIMITRIMONROE

who own jukeboxes and trendy animal print furniture and serve martinis, to keep in their bathroom to impress their porkchop-sideburned friends - I write for 'em. *Rock'n'roll Outbreak* is promising and home to some good young writers, but it mainly functions as the Pelado Records newsletter. I liked the "Be The Media" issue of *Punk Planet* with the Howard Zinn piece, but I've never really gotten along with vegetarian Fugazi fans who carry cell phones and wear camoflauge shorts to college on Big Papa's dime. 'Saw one of them overpriced, slick "Gen Y" mags called *Flaunt* - it was all advertisements and pictures of anorexic models and tanned guys who dress like only me, Ratboy, and Thee Hypnotics did in '91, and the obligatory Michael Stipe fuggin' photo-essay. It's a damn shame that little bands, who come together on their own accord, can't get nowhere in popular music today, 'cause I know lots of folks who are every bit as mediocre as Michael Stipe and capable of just as much pomposity! Australia's *Cat Scratch Fever*, the brilliant Vicious Kitten Records newsletter, is available online and definitely worth checkin' out. Britain's *Mojo* remains outstanding, despite the prohibitive import cover price and its tendency to relentlessly worship Pink Floyd and Radiohead with the kind of unbridled passion that the Big Takeover reserves for R.E.M. and Radiohead.

Power Pop Geeks and Rock'n'Roll Burnouts alike, though, should check out *Now Wave Magazine* starring Josh Rutledge - the Richard Meltzer of the Millenium! www.geocities.com/nowwave/ . The Always Engaging FIRST CHURCH OF HOLY ROCK'N'ROLL website is home to one of my all-time fave rock writers, Phil Overeem, but they're gonna try to trick you into expanding your musical horizons, so be forewarned, http://povereem.mypeoplepc.com/ . Lastly, Jeff Dahl's *Sonic Iguana* continues to reign supreme, as far as American underground rock mags go. Mike Frame's a great writer and Ultra-Under-rated JEFF DAHL is the last of the hardcore troubadours, but don't get the credit he deserves for being the missing link between THE LORDS OF THE NEW CHURCH and DOGS D'AMOUR and the late-nineties wave of trashy punk'n'roll led by such groups as the HUMPERS and ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN. Send $4 to Sonic Iguana/PO Box 1867Cave Creek, AZ 85327/USA. Shit, Sioux City Pete even writes for 'em! In the last issue, Black Halos singer and Sub-Pop recording artist Billy Hopeless talks about failed rockers who are forced to abandon their lifelong dreams and get straight jobs, in the process becoming intolerably embittered, and that really hit home hard 'round here at Never Was Central. "My name's Forgotten!" The always smashing *Sonic Iguana* regularly features shit like ROSE TATTOO, the BEAT ANGELS, ALICE COOPER, the RUNAWAYS, and all the keenest acts in the ultra-underground realms of glam-trash-punk. Get it while it's hot!

Gone But Never To Be Forgotten: Joey Ramone, Top Jimmy, Ed "Big Daddy" Roth. R.I.P.

I'm Still Seeking/Waiting To Hear From Brijitte West, Tony Meter, Ian Astbury, and Nina Antonia. Gimee a call. A great lawnchair or hammock book for this summer is *Give Me Liberty* by Gerry Spence. Michael Moore.com teaches you how to fight the death penalty and phony drug war. I guess that's all for now. ⊕

xxx D.T.K. L.A.M.F. Your ol' pal, Dim Star*

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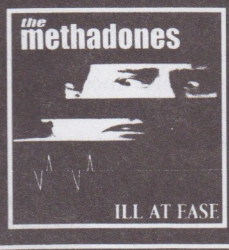
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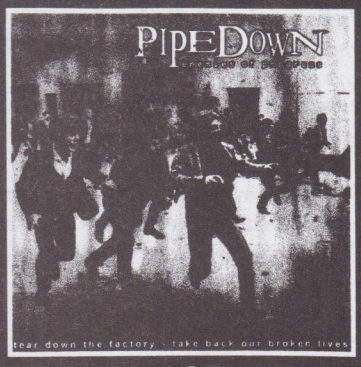


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PAINT A VULGAR PICTURE: THE MYTH OF STAR POWER, THE DEATH OF PRINCESSES, THE DEBASEMENT OF CONGRESSMEN AND POP CULTURE STARS, AND HOW IT'S HELPED KILL ANY SUBSTANCE IN ROCK 'N' ROLL OR OUR MEDIA

"At the record company meeting, on their hands — at last — a dead star! And ooh, the plans that they weave, and ooh, the sickening greed....The sycophantic slags all say: 'I knew him first, and I knew him well.'....BPI, MTV, BBC, 'Please them! Please them!' (Sadly, this was your life) But you could have said no, if you wanted to. You could have walked away...couldn't you?"

- Morrissey, The Smiths, "Paint A Vulgar Picture," from *Strangeways, Here We Come* (1987)



JACK RABID

I have often thought of J.D. Salinger and the late Greta Garbo. At the height of their fame and earning potential, both just *vanished* from society. Salinger refused to write. Garbo refused to act. They stayed home. The clerks at the grocery store might see them, but damned if anyone attending major public functions would. They were immune to calls from an adoring public to ply their enormous talents in their arts. They just stayed home, guarding their privacy, their very anonymity, as if it were their last possession.

A decade ago, some paparazzi guy staked out Salinger, the more reclusive of the two (since he had bugged off to a country house, whereas Garbo preferred holing up in her New York apartment). I hadn't seen a photo of the man for years, as was his wish, and I could have done *without* seeing the photos of a visibly enraged old man striking at the lensman in the photo I subsequently saw in The New York *Post*, after the photographer returned from ruining Salinger's peace. This was not how I wished to think of the author of such striking short stories as "A Perfect Day For Bananafish" or *A Catcher in the Rye* or that had made me think so much as a teenager. I wanted to smash the guy's camera myself, since Salinger's attempts had fallen short. How dare you!

The later, equally disconcerting newspaper photos of a livid, elderly Garbo reacting similarly on her sidewalk had the same effect on me. I just felt sorry for her. If I wanted to see her, I could always rent *Anna Karenina* and watch the scene where she emerges from the train smoke and revel. If she wanted me to see her, she would have shown up at the Oscars. Or made a movie for the first time since 1941's "Two-Faced Woman," over *four decades* prior. She didn't. We the public should have just left her alone.

All this was on my mind as I returned from Paris, after my first visit to that unbelievably pretty city. Just before I left, I had told a friend I was going there, and he'd asked me if I might visit the site where Princess Diana lost her life in the tunnel next to the Seine, near the Champs-Elysées right off the Place de l'Alma, or Jim Morrison's grave in the famous cemetery Père Lachaise. What?!?!?!?!? Now my friend is no moron, but of *all* the things to see in Paris, like, say, the Louvre, Eiffel Tour, Musée d'Orsay, Nôtre Dame, Musée Picasso, the Seine, Napoleon's Tomb, Pompidou Center, Sacré Coeur, the Arc de Triomphe (or "The Arc de Capitulation," as one of my funnier pals jokingly calls it), the former site of the Bastille, the nearby Palace of Versailles (where the World War I peace treaty was signed), the Place De La Concorde (where much more notable folks like Marie Antoinette, Danton, and Robespierre lost their heads one day, yuck, yuck), or just every beautiful neighborhood in that amazing city (like the unreal Latin Quarter, where I stayed)... in such a historic city going back beyond Joan of Arc, it is perhaps telling that Americans are more obsessed with the deaths of two extremely transient, and comparatively meaningless, recent *celebrities*. Give me a break!

But that's our culture, isn't it? To a T!

If you need a bigger reminder, watch the five to ten minutes of news airtime devoted every night to the missing Chandra Levy. Thousands of people are missing persons, many of them abducted children, and they are not news on any night of the week. But only one of them had a meaningless sexual affair with a congressman whom none of us had ever heard of before, so every paper and news show and gossip journal in the land sends waves of reporters to cover this non-story ("Well, we still didn't find her today, again...Back to you, Biff."). We get reams of information on the sex life of one obscure congressman, as if that matters at all! If the man is a suspect, fair enough, but I don't think he ever will be. And if he is not, as the police have been saying every day, I fail to see how his sex life with the missing woman has any relevance to us at all, any more than my sex life during the last 20 years has any relevance to this column (though if *Hit List* was like most media organs, it would prefer a piece on that.)

Oh my gosh, a man of power has an affair with a woman half his age, stop the presses! Wow, *that's* never happened before in the history of the world. Meanwhile, if you want to find out anything on a real story with a genuinely massive impact on all of our lives, like John McCain's fight for campaign finance reform, well...that's buried on page 15, and rates only two paragraphs alongside the eight paragraphs on "Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman are being civil to each other again, while they date other people." Yawn. Celebrity! Celebrity! Celebrity! Why aren't other missing persons worth our media's time? Because that same media didn't made celebrities out of those unlucky people. At least we've heard of Kidman, so if she is mixed up in a missing persons case, you can

almost forgive the media reporting it. But who among us had ever heard of Gary Condit or Chandra Levy? Again, how is this case any more important than the hundreds of other missing person cases or, for that matter, the thousands of murder cases we never hear a stitch about? And why can't we get bigger news coverage about anything of any real importance, like Dick Cheney's insane push for an increase in nuclear power?

But really, the ultimate example of this sort of garbage is still the coverage of Princess Diana. This August, we will all once again have to endure heart-wringing media coverage on the anniversary of her death. We still cannot get rid of this story, even after a few years. You'd think that she was JFK getting assassinated in an open car, for all the newspaper ink and TV time wasted on this subject. And unlike our former dead president, it is that very same media that could be said to have killed her. Funny, that. This kind of rubbish is never-ending, mostly because we the people buy into such crap, day after day. Admittedly, this is a music magazine, and there has been plenty written elsewhere about her death and the role played by pursuing paparazzi. But long before my trip to Paris, I'd been considering writing about the myth of star power, especially the way it drives the music business. So let me get to the main points of this piece. Believe me, it all ties in.

In an earlier *Hit List* column, I cited Pere Ubu's David Thomas' remarks (taken from an interview I conducted with him in London on February 15, 1993, which was thence printed in an issue of *Creem* and later in issue 34 of my own publication *The Big Takeover*) concerning the future downloading of music off the internet. But that was only one of many prescient predictions and utterly striking comments he made that day. Another observation that set my brain a-whirling was the following:

"Pre-punk bands like Can, the early Roxy Music, early Brian Eno, Kevin Ayers, Soft Machine, Amon Duul, Hawkwind, Marc Bolan, Neu, Faust, Henry Cow and Tangerine Dream were music's purest statement, in the years 1974-1976, before it was sidetracked. It was a vision of the next step for music after the advances of the '60s, by people who actually believed that rock music was an art form. And by people who actually believed that, although Elvis Presley was a genius, that times move on and you don't repeat endlessly that rock music is teen rebellion, because this is, frankly, *baloney*, and self-serving claptrap by people who prefer the easy way out, and television, the medium, not Television the band."

"Obviously, the record companies are happy to keep doling up that teen-rebellion nonsense because it's a money-spinner. It's not truth. It's not reality. It's not art. It's not rock music, because rock music is nothing unless it's art. Thank you, good night!"

I might add that the now-patented "teen rebellion" nonsense is only one part of a two-headed monster. The other half is the resulting myth of "star power" as a marketing device. It is a barely-concealed secret that record companies often meddle with the bands that they sign, in the process often driving a wedge between the person who does the singing and the other members. Labels obviously find it much easier to promote a "star," and that is much easier to do when the star has a higher profile or is doing a "solo" career instead of being a mere band member. Hey, you can put his or her name on the sleeve and in the ad! When they decide to sign a band, they usually do so in the hopes that the frontman or frontwoman will be physically attractive to the public. That way they



can market the group via the singer(s)' sex appeal, not the intrinsic value of the entire band's music. How many times have I heard a band complain that some A&R talent scout had the temerity to actually tell them to their face that they "loved the band's music" and would have been thrilled to sign the group, except that in their estimation, they didn't think the singer was, if you forgive my anecdotal language, "fuckable."

If you find the above unbelievable, let me disabuse you of your naivete. It's common practice. And labels are not shy about manufacturing "stars" above anything else in a context where music should be at least as important. For example, a perfectly talented pop writer such as Evan Dando of the Lemonheads was broken in this country only when his label, Atlantic, designated him as the band's "Alterna-hunk" and aggressively pushed the group's ho-hum cover of Simon & Garfunkel's "Mrs. Robinson." Is it any wonder that to this day, it's hard to get anyone to take Dando's gift for hooks seriously? Outside of N'Sync and Backstreet Boys gigs, teenage girls may no longer scream their little headsies off every time some cute singer twitches his eyebrow or stoops for a glass of water, which in turn makes all the male fans want to be him, but it's still the formula for success when the checkbooks come out.

And it's *our* fault. Yes, every bit of it. We pay the price for having a celebrity-mad culture of our own making, one that gets worse with the advent of every new form of media, with the addition of every extra 10 channels to our cable and satellite TV's (and its blatant infomercial programs), with the marketing of news as entertainment, and with every sensationalistic new talk show host, many of whom make old Morton Downey Jr. seem like the patron saint of restraint. We love the useless, inane, immature spectacle of phony stars more that we wish to do without them.

Which is where that comment about the death site of Princess Diana comes in. With all due respect to the late Princess of Wales, whose charity efforts were extensive — which immediately separates her from 98% of our other celebrities, who are better described as public leeches — what talent, exactly, did she ever exhibit that led to her being "the most photographed woman in the world?" So much so that it led to her death, as two perfectly sober drivers were dispatched as decoys for the photo men, and a drunken, off-duty man was called in to drive her to her sudden demise, as we will soon be reminded again on her death's anniversary. Did she cure cancer? Save a regiment? Was she a modern day Marie Curie, Amelia Earhart, Molly Pitcher, Clara Barton, Charlotte Bronte, Susan B. Anthony, Alice Stone Blackwell, Mary Pickford, Harriet Tubman, Barbara Jordan, or that truly remarkable socialist, Helen Keller? I mean, isn't being the "most photographed woman" one hell of a distinction in our media-saturated society?

OK, she married into the public limelight. The same as, say, Hillary Clinton (who at least was a well-respected lawyer in her own right, if not a mass-figure, and is proving to be a competent Senator, having stood the test of an election, which Diana never did). But at least Hillary's husband had a fairly important job that she might have exerted some influence on, as spouses always do in some way. What exactly is a "princess" in this day and age? It's a fricking fairy tale, that's what. Without directly quoting from the Smiths again (from their *The Queen is Dead* LP), is there any better example of our banal desire, nay, desperate need, for phony celebrity, than a powerless monarchy that exists as a ridiculous ceremonial figurehead so that tourists can gurgle and the media can sell ad time? Elizabeth ruled an empire 400 years ago. Victoria did likewise, only a century ago. Even Maggie Thatcher ruled Diana's nation during her tenure as princess. Let's just say that, like 'em or not, they all did a little more than wear gowns and act in a play that was written over 100 years old.

That royalty play is not unlike the hoary old "star" scenario that the rock "journalists" and culture commentators who cover rock perpetuate *ad nauseum*. And they will continue to do so from now until we are all food for worms. For in the sphere of rock 'n' roll, what is the imperative of a music journalist but to chronicle equally worthless celebrities? Even journalists with impeccable integrity will tell you that they have no real choice. Go ahead, *you* try making a pitch to an editor about your worthwhile story idea. The public wants 1000 stories about the same 200 people, even if those people aren't doing *anything* at the moment. Better to pen a story about Billy Joel doing something fairly common and not very newsworthy, like throwing up in a restaurant, or about Madonna jogging in Central Park (how monumental!) than to waste space on the serious work by some lesser-known artist on record or in concert. The Spice Girls farted in sequence today. Read all about it! And buy their new individual Spice Girls deodorants (I kid you not) because, I am sure, they are superior products to Sure and Old Spice. Speculate on the virginity of Britney Spears! Oh, how mysterious! Marvel at the alcohol abuse rehab of A.J. from the Backstreet Boys! Now there's a story! Singer drinks heavily! Stop the presses...again!

And then there's that myth of "teen rebellion" that Thomas mentioned, which further fuels the celebrity hunt in rock. People like Axl Rose, Flea, Courtney Love, Oasis's Gallagher brothers, Eminem, and Tommy Lee of Motley Crüe have understood this for years: the more of an asshole they make of themselves, the more marketable they become and the more money they make, no matter what you think of their music, good or bad. If Rock was as popular as pro sports, these often offensive brats would be inking multi-million dollar Nike endorsements. In fact, it was probably the phony "teen rebellion" and "anti-authoritarianism for its own sake" myths (as opposed to real social/cultural rebellion, like the best of punk), so well implanted in the rock marketing culture for 40 years, that later gave Madison Avenue and the publishing houses the idea to start lavishing their millions on such bona fide jerkoffs as Dennis Rodman, Albert Belle, Deion Sanders, or Keyshawn Johnson. Meanwhile, more classy star athletes such as Frank Thomas, Ray Borque, and Karl Malone never seem to be eating Big Macs on my TV screen or peeking out of the sleeves at my local bookstore's window.

This is not to say that *no one* has real star power. Charisma does exist. A performing magnetism made Radiohead way more exciting live the last time I saw them at Roseland than their beloved former support band, Teenage Fan Club, a group I personally also love, but one clearly lacking in those qualities (though their music saves their shows, as evidenced by their gig last week at Bowery Ballroom). But I'm not talking about the hour or two these folks are on the stage, where it actually counts. I'm talking about our obsession with these people during the other 23 hours of the day. If you don't want paparazzi chasing a fake princess or actress around, putting their very lives at risk at times, don't cling to phony celebrity institutions like royalty, and don't spend 50 cents on a paper because it has a stupid, grainy photo of the woman on the cover embracing some son of a rich man. It's not the paparazzi's fault, it is *ours*.

I mean, it's easy to blame them for the death of a celebrity of our own making. But we made her one, after all, and in this indirect way we killed her, much like the star myth tragedy that was acted out in David Bowie's seminal 1971 masterpiece *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars*, killed the protagonist. I read that before the Princess' death, the guy with the tele-

hoto lens got paid close to *half a million dollars* for a photo of this ame woman (who was at least a nice and kindhearted woman, nlike Pete Rose, Rodman, et al) doing nothing more than hugging ome man born into immense wealth! That's more money than I, or kely you, have made in twenty years of employment. That's the ind of potential fortune that made otherwise sane men and omen climb into ramshackle covered wagons and cross three-tate wide mountain ranges, and trample through the Native merican's last strongholds in 1849. Don't you think those camera uys, named after Fellini's 1960 "La Dolce Vita" character Signor apparazzo, knew of the potential riches involved when they opped on their motorcycles, those modern covered wagons? Of ourse the did. And *what* demand caused such a price for their iane work? Until we cure ourselves of this incredibly childish fas-ination with mere fame, as opposed to real talent, we will contin-e to get the incredibly inane media programming, public-relations ainted information, and dumbed-down entertainment that we so ichly deserve.

Don't you ever wonder why people who slept with their mother's usband or son's girlfriend, or "did" an entire men's football or omen's field hockey team, or hatever, seem to be forever ying into a TV studio for the rivilege of humiliating them-elves in front of tens of mil-ons on some stupid daytime alk show instead of just oing so in their local town? Vell, what do you expect hen someone as blatantly eprehensible, pathetic, and ontemptible as a Joey uttafuoco (another massive alent, he! What work does he o for charity? What land ines does he call attention o?) became an international elebrity. We've so thoroughly estroyed any connection etween fame and earned espect that we've settled instead for the fame of merely being *rec-gnized*. What a crock. Voilà! You're a *"somebody"* if you're on T.V. ven if it's because you just burned your house down while free-asing cocaine, or had sex with all four of your wife's sisters or hus-and's brothers. Gee, look at me!

And yes, there are greater ills in the world than a *People* maga-ine mentality, but — and this is perhaps the most important point f this piece — it is increasingly corrupting our editorial policies, ot just fueling our eroding appreciation for the "art" that Thomas poke of. A few years ago, a serial killer's murders went unreport-d in my local paper and network until he killed a *celebrity* fashion esigner, thereby instantly *becoming* a celebrity himself. Were the ives of his previous victims worth so much less? And what *kind* of elebrity did we make of him thereafter. Had he lived, would he be . Manson, a Bundy, or a Gein?

As a final note, even after spending a good part of the last 23 ears of my life hanging around musicians backstage — or being ne myself — so as to better understand and then chronicle their reative processes or their views on music, one thing still amazes ne — the endless processions of young, impressionable people who vill wait in the pouring rain for two hours outside a band's stage loor. You look into their faces, and they seem to yearn for nothing ut a fleeting moment's encounter with a "star" in order to validate heir own existence, sexual or otherwise.

How does one tell them that punk's great message was that their validation lay in their own existence, that they would have worth just by doing something constructive, anything (like raising money for charity, see?) that gives them a good reason to feel that they're contributing to the world rather than simply functioning as a parasite (as so many spoiled, petulant celebrities do!)? That they can make their own damn music if they have something to say? That if they help a little old lady across the street, they've proba-bly done far more for the world than Axl Rose did that day?

How does one explain to them that so many musicians of either major or even underground-level fame got there on the basis of ruthlessness, insecurity, or an unchecked, out-of-control ego? Or that the hearts of these famous musicians' *real* fans are so much purer than those of the bloodsucking, grown-up children that they worship? (For example, why do people think it's funny to spot Liam Gallagher with his hand on a female fan's butt backstage at Irving Plaza, only a few months after he married another celebrity, Patsy Kensit? Why is Gary Condit considered such a womanizing asshole, whereas the flight attendants and interns who foolishly fall for the fake glory of his power and for the dubious privilege of having trysts with a mar-ried man of this sort (who won't even let them carry I.D.s or credit cards to their secret rendezvous) are immune to criticism? Why do I even know any of these details, since there are far more important events that could and should have been reported to me by CNN?

We want the clowns!
Send in the clowns!
There's really no need to await their arrival.
They're already here.

The best thing that rock musicians could do for their "true believer" fans — if they were really concerned about them, which most of them aren't — would be to urge them to "go for it" in their *own* lives, rather than trying to live their lives vicariously through the actions of others who they don't even know and who have become celebrity heroes to them mainly due to blind, lottery-like luck or sheer accident. Don't expect that to happen anytime soon, though.

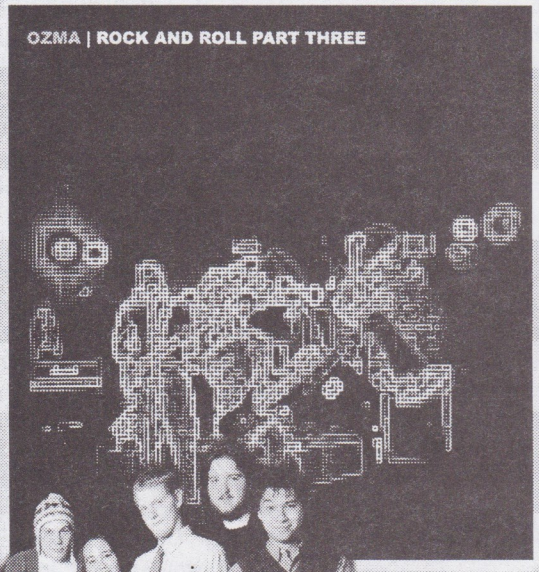
Supposedly, every young person wants to be famous when they grow up, as well as to be loved for being incredibly good at some-thing. But Garbo and Salinger obviously saw through our culture's starry-eyed predilections, and the Beatles stopped touring in 1966 when they realized that their concerts, which they had used to per-fect their live, breathing art since 1958, had become nothing more than freak shows, like the bearded lady, the rubber man, and other circus acts. We have managed to turn everyone — our biggest tal-ents, our most modest ones, and our most artifically-constructed ones — all into clown-like stars. We want the clowns! Send in the clowns! There's really no need to await their arrival. They're already here. They're everywhere. And we put them there. ⊕

To check out Jack's magazine 20-year-old magazine, The Big Takeover, *have a look at the web site at www.bigtakeover.com. Sample issues are only $5 and subscriptions are only $20 for four issues.)*

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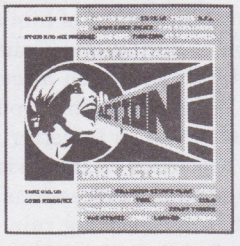
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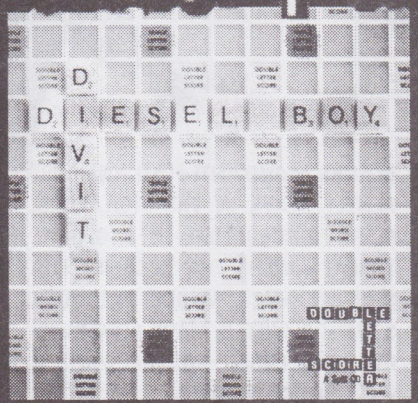
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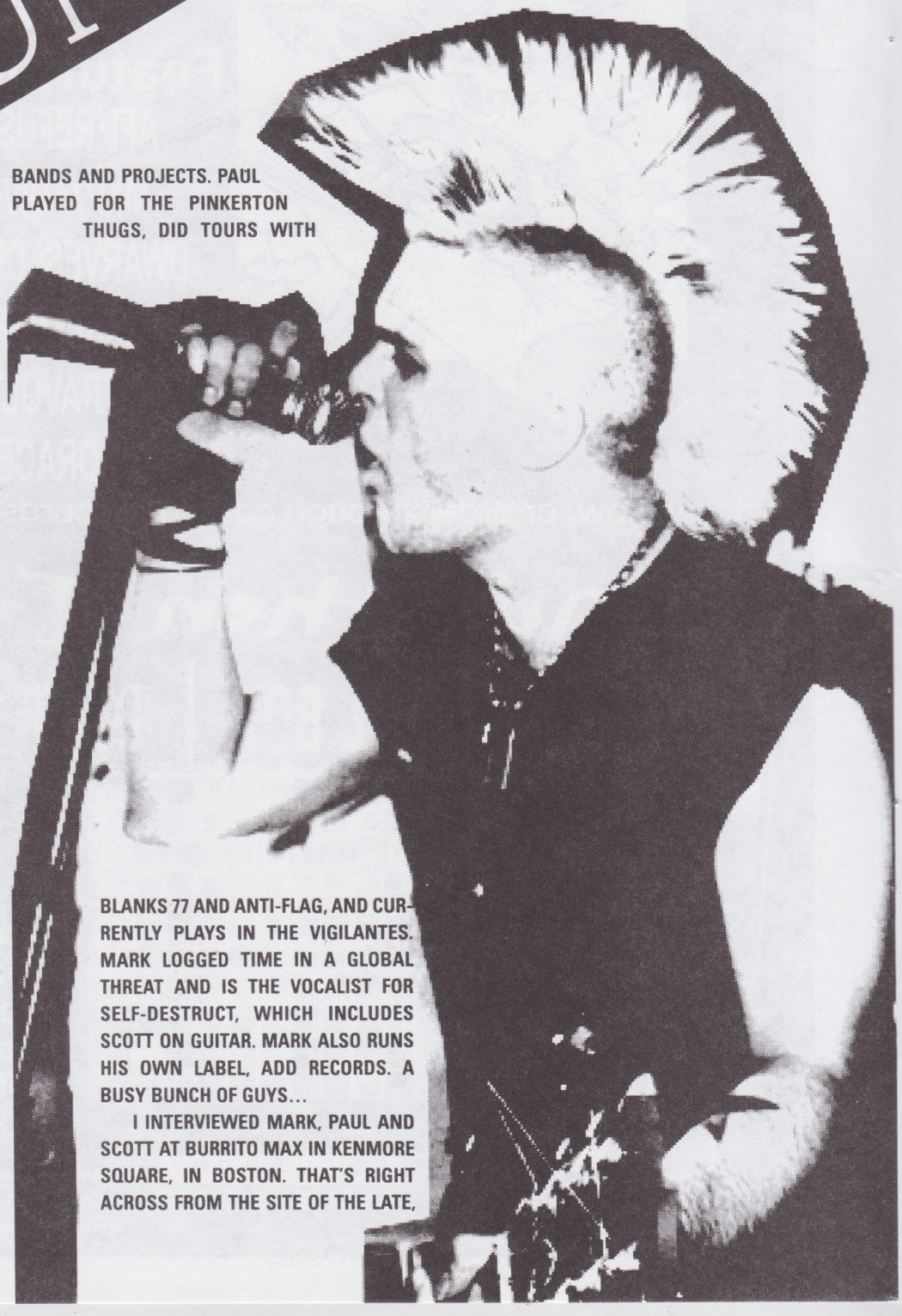
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THE UNSEEN

BY AL QUINT

THE UNSEEN ARE A LONG-TIME FIXTURE ON THE BOSTON PUNK SCENE, ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING ACTS FROM THE MID-90'S BURST OF ACTIVITY THAT SPAWNED THE DROPKICK MURPHYS, DUCKY BOYS, SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN, 30 SECONDS OVER TOKYO, PINKERTON THUGS, ETC... THEY'VE EXPERIENCED A MUSICAL AS WELL AS LYRICAL MATURATION OVER THE YEARS THAT IS PERHAPS THE INEVITABLE BYPRODUCT OF GROWING UP IN THE SCENE (THEY WERE TEENAGERS WHEN THEY BEGAN). THE UNSEEN STAND STRONG, EVEN THOUGH THERE'S VIRTUALLY NO PLACE FOR THEM TO PLAY IN THEIR HOMETOWN. SO THEY'VE TAKEN TO THE ROAD FOR COUNTLESS TOURS ACROSS THE US AND, MORE RECENTLY, JAPAN. ALONG THE WAY, THEY'VE RELEASED A NUMBER OF 7"S AND SPLITS AND THREE FULL-LENGTH ALBUMS: "WORKING CLASS CRUCIFIXION" (VML, RE-RELEASED ON A-F), "SO THIS IS FREEDOM" (A-F) AND THEIR LATEST, "THE ANGER AND THE TRUTH" ON BYO, THEIR BEST-SOUNDING RECORDING TO DATE. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME PERSONNEL SHIFTS—ORIGINAL VOCALIST MARC CARLSON LEFT FAIRLY EARLY ON, AND GUITARIST BRIAN "CHAINSAW" RILEY WAS IN THE BAND FOR A TIME AS WELL. BUT THE FOUR MAIN MEMBERS HAVE REMAINED THE SAME THROUGHOUT MOST OF THE BAND'S CAREER—PAUL RUSSO (VOCALS/GUITAR/DRUMS), SCOTT HADAYIA (GUITAR), TRIPP UNDERWOOD (BASS/VOCALS) AND MARK CIVITARESE (DRUMS/VOCALS). IN ADDITION, THE MEMBERS OF THE UNSEEN HAVE KEPT THEMSELVES BUSY IN VARIOUS OTHER BANDS AND PROJECTS. PAUL PLAYED FOR THE PINKERTON THUGS, DID TOURS WITH BLANKS 77 AND ANTI-FLAG, AND CURRENTLY PLAYS IN THE VIGILANTES. MARK LOGGED TIME IN A GLOBAL THREAT AND IS THE VOCALIST FOR SELF-DESTRUCT, WHICH INCLUDES SCOTT ON GUITAR. MARK ALSO RUNS HIS OWN LABEL, ADD RECORDS. A BUSY BUNCH OF GUYS...

I INTERVIEWED MARK, PAUL AND SCOTT AT BURRITO MAX IN KENMORE SQUARE, IN BOSTON. THAT'S RIGHT ACROSS FROM THE SITE OF THE LATE, GREAT RAT, WHICH WAS TORN DOWN TO MAKE WAY FOR A LUXURY HOTEL. DISGUSTING, ISN'T IT?

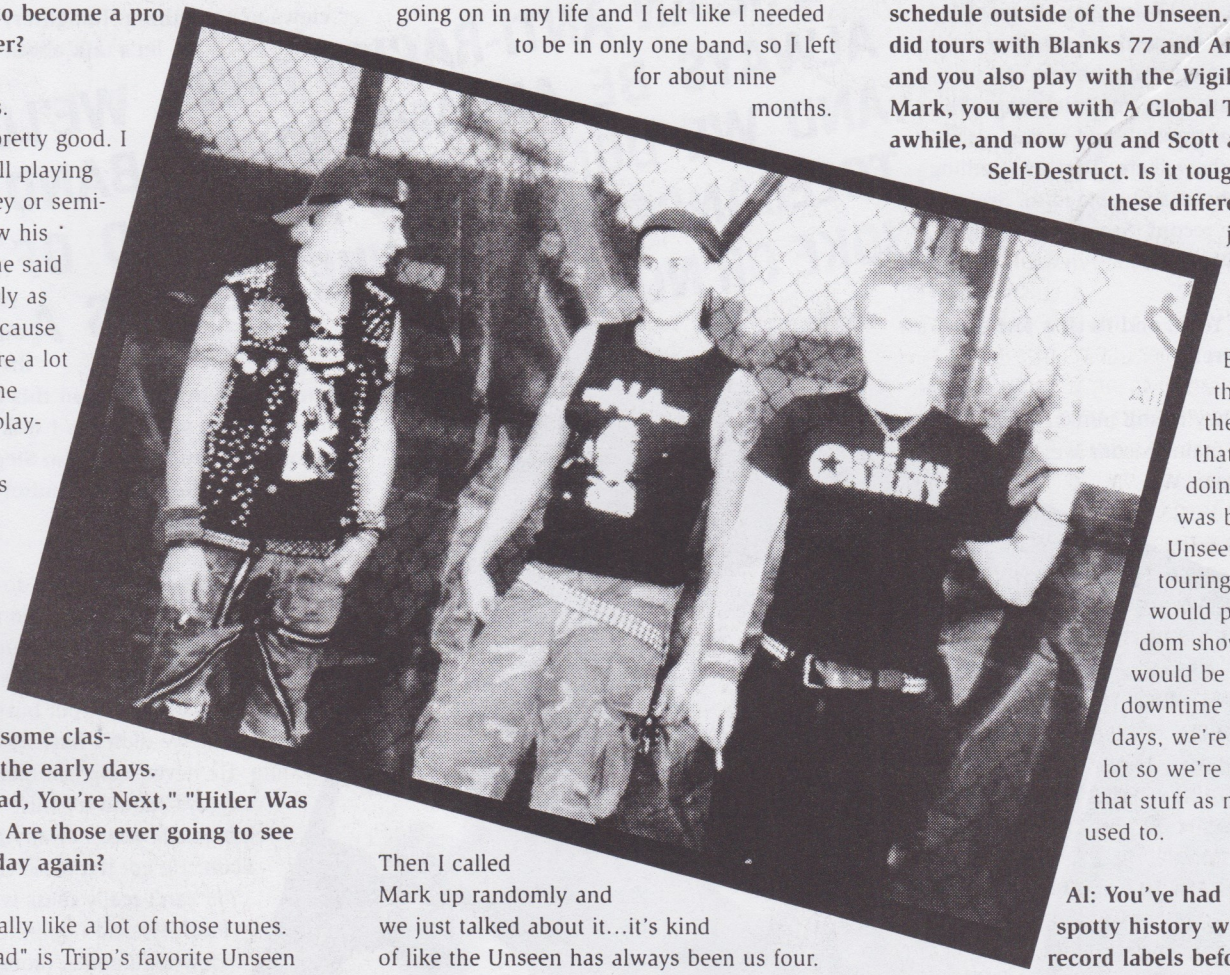


Al: A lot of people might not be familiar with you, so why don't you give us a quick history lesson on the band. You started when, about '94?

Mark: I think about '94 or '95. It was me and Tripp who started the band, along with two other kids. Then we got Scott shortly after and put out a 7". Right before the 7" came out, we got rid of the singer [Marc Carlson] because he really wasn't that into punk. Scott and Tripp had known Paul before the band had started and we all got together from there.
Paul: I lived in Maine at the time, so I would come down and randomly play shows. Just hop on the bus. The bus was 11 bucks or something.

Al: Wasn't your old singer Marc going to become a pro hockey player?

Paul: He was.
Mark: He's pretty good. I think he's still playing college hockey or semi-pro. But I saw his father, who he said he's not nearly as good now because the players are a lot better than the high school players.
Scott: He was the man in high school.
Mark: Yeah, he was a pretty big deal.



Al: You had some classic songs in the early days. "Choke's Dead, You're Next," "Hitler Was A Vampire." Are those ever going to see the light of day again?

Mark: I actually like a lot of those tunes. "Choke's Dead" is Tripp's favorite Unseen song. (laughs) At every show, he says "let's play 'Choke's Dead.'"

Al: Why don't you tell the story behind that song?

Mark: It was just because of the whole "Punk's Dead, You're Next" thing [by Slapshot], that song. It was actually written by Marc Carlson. He was a big Slapshot fan. I don't know what he was thinking.

Al: Paul, you actually left the band for a time, correct? You were doing the Pinkerton Thugs thing, but then you came back. And Chainsaw replaced you when you left...

Paul: I left the band after the first tour we did with Toxic Narcotic. Basically, while I was out on tour, all this shit happened. My grandfather died, I lost my girlfriend, and all this personal crap was going on. It really fucked me up, so I felt I couldn't do the band anymore and I left. And around that time the Thugs were doing a lot too. The Unseen were always gigging out, the Thugs were always playing, and all this stuff was going on in my life and I felt like I needed to be in only one band, so I left for about nine months.

Then I called Mark up randomly and we just talked about it...it's kind of like the Unseen has always been us four. Not that Chainsaw wasn't good in the band, and we were actually a five-piece for awhile.

Al: I know, you guys were all switching off on vocals.

Paul: Yeah. Not that it wasn't good or whatever, but it just always felt like us four.
Mark: As a five-piece, the energy was better because there was always a front-man, but it was just so confusing. Like someone would play guitar on this song, bass on that song.
Paul: It kind of got ridiculous.

Mark: Then we started to write the new record, "So This Is Freedom," and it just wasn't working. Scott was basically the lead guitar guy and Chainsaw was doing all kinds of leads and stuff. It was just easier writing the album as a four-piece. We're still best friends with him, though.

Al: And he sang on the new album, right?

Mark: Yeah, he sings on "No Evacuation." He wrote that song, so we asked him to sing it.

Al: You guys have also all kept up a busy schedule outside of the Unseen. Paul, you did tours with Blanks 77 and Anti-Flag, and you also play with the Vigilantes now. Mark, you were with A Global Threat for awhile, and now you and Scott are doing Self-Destruct. Is it tough doing all these different projects?

Paul: It is now. Before, I think, a lot of the reason that we were doing so much was because the Unseen weren't touring a lot. We would play a random show and there would be a lot of downtime but, nowadays, we're touring a lot so we're not doing that stuff as much as we used to.

Al: You've had kind of a spotty history with some record labels before you did the record with BYO. I know the first album came out on VML, who you weren't happy with, and that it then got reissued on A-F, who also did your second album.

Mark: A-F was great for us. Their only problem is that they're never around, because Anti-Flag are such a big band. They're always on tour. But for the amount of time they spent on us, I don't have anything bad to say about them. I wish they had better distribution, though. They had no European

distribution, which is something that we really need. But I can't say anything bad about those guys. Whenever we needed money, they'd loan us money. We needed money for Japan, and they loaned us money. Whenever they said our records were going to be there, they were always there. It was just time to move onto something else.

Paul: They said that they couldn't handle our next record because they were on the road so much. So they told us that if we wanted to find another record label, go ahead.

Mark: If you're trying to go out on the road, it's so much better to have a label that can help you out. BYO's amazing. If we called them and said we need money, they would loan us a couple hundred bucks.

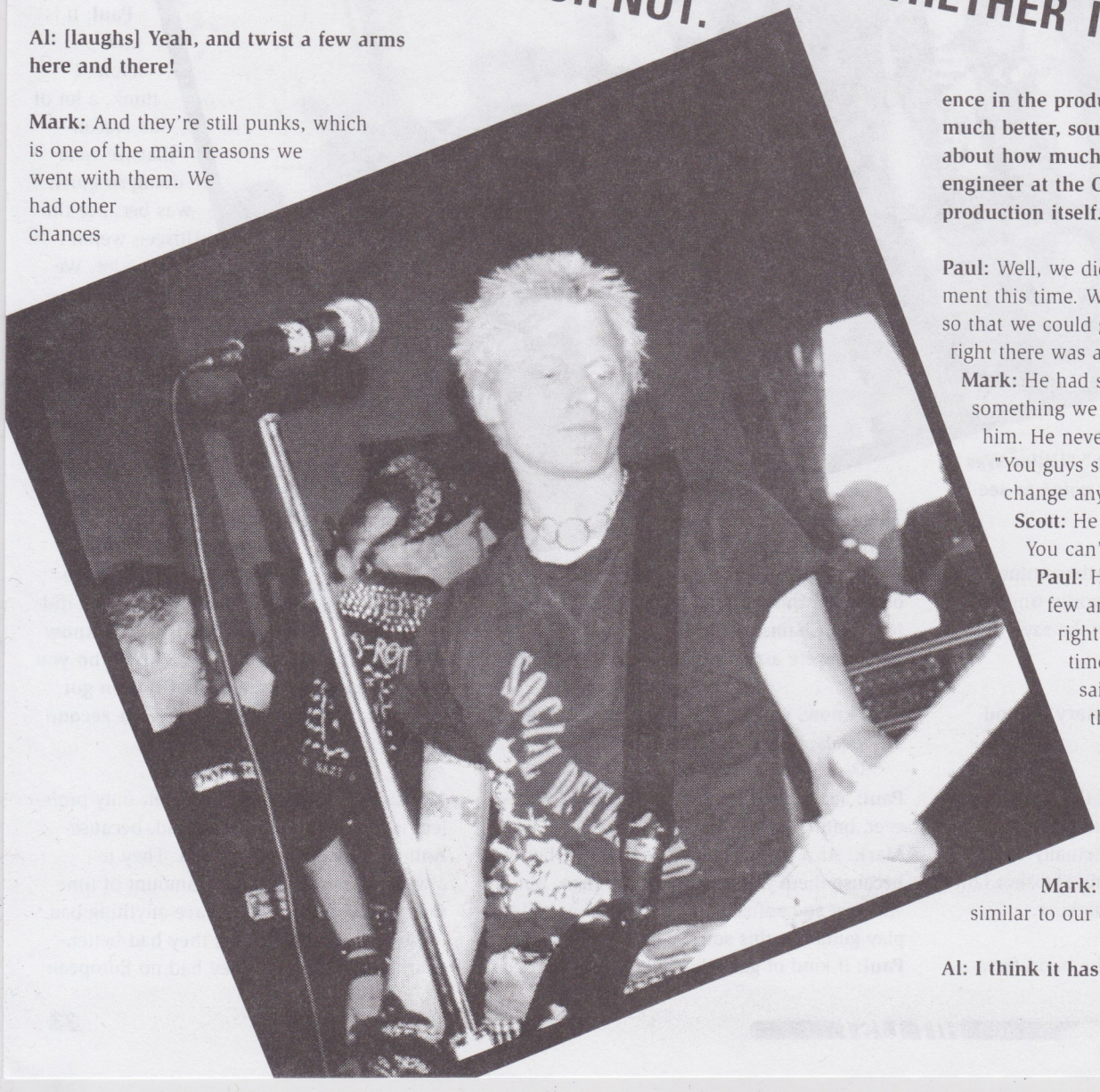
Paul: There are so many little things, like showing up at the club and seeing your flyer for the show there. That's something we've never been accustomed to. Seeing a poster for the record. Seeing ads. They'll call us up and get us interviews.

Al: [laughs] Yeah, and twist a few arms here and there!

Mark: And they're still punks, which is one of the main reasons we went with them. We had other chances with other labels but, in the end, they offered us a good deal and they seemed really trustworthy.

Paul: A lot of bigger labels, like Nitro and Hellcat, came out to our shows too. But, I mean, look through your record collection and look through the stuff that BYO has put out. They're an amazing label, and the Sterns are really good guys. Except for a few dodgy things they've put out, like the Brigade. But 7 Seconds, Youth Brigade, Agression, "Someone's Gonna Get Their Head Kicked In."

WE'RE AN ANTI-RACIST BAND. WE'LL ALWAYS BE AN ANTI-RACIST BAND AND WE DON'T HAVE ANY KIND OF TOLERANCE FOR IT, WHETHER IT'S A JOKE OR NOT.



Al: That's a pretty strong list.

Mark: The new Pistol Grip record's really good, too.

Al: And since you're always touring, I assume that it wouldn't be practical to do it on your own label [ADD].

Mark: It'd be too much of a headache to do it ourselves.

Paul: Plus, you'd probably steal all of the money!

Al: Yeah, you'd use it for wrestling pay per views or something. [laughter] Anyway, let's talk about the new record. I was listening to it, as well as a few songs from the other two albums, and there's a distinct difference in the production on this one. It's much better, sound-wise. I was curious about how much input Jim Siegel [the engineer at the Outpost studio] had on the production itself.

Paul: Well, we didn't have to do it in a basement this time. We actually had the money so that we could go to a real studio. That right there was a big step for us.

Mark: He had some input but if it was something we didn't like, we would tell him. He never really sat there and said "You guys should try this." He didn't change any songs or anything.

Scott: He got the basic stuff down. You can't really mess with it.

Paul: He and I definitely got in a few arguments, though. I sat right next to him the whole time at the console board and said "Let's do this, let's do that," and they always hate me for doing that. So we got in some arguments, but if you don't get in an argument there's probably something wrong.

Mark: Do you think it sounds similar to our other records?

Al: I think it has a hotter production; it

sounds fuller and louder. The structure of the songs isn't much different. The lyrics have gotten a bit more mature, and the playing has gotten sharper.

Paul: How many times can you say "fuck the cops"? How many different ways?

Al: Let's get into some of these lyrics. They're pointed, as usual, but there are a few songs where you're directly critical of the punk scene. I'm thinking specifically about "What Happened," which expresses some disillusionment about the local scene. Paul, you've told me in the past that you think Boston is dead.

Mark: We actually just wrote a song about how Boston's dead.
Paul: It's funny that you mentioned, earlier, about the Boston Punk Page and how, not only on the page but in general, there's this overt racism, and that song is addressing that. Not that, particularly, but from what I remember in my experiences a few years ago at the shows and in the scene in Boston, and how it's changed so much since. In general, it just seems like there are a lot of boneheads. Whether they're just being racist...whether they think it's funny or not funny is not really the issue. We're an anti-racist band. We'll always be an anti-racist band and we don't have any kind of tolerance for it, whether it's a joke or not. I've talked to a lot of those kids, and it's supposed to be funny...

Al: I don't buy that one fucking bit.

Paul: I don't either. The Boston scene has changed, but we definitely haven't. Everything that we've stood for remains the same.

Al: I know you guys are still the same. It just seems like some things have gotten really rotten around here.

Mark: Well, I think the Rat closing had a lot to do with it. Basically, with the shows at the Rat, that guy [owner Jim Harold] went through a ton of bullshit that no one even knew about. Every fucking weekend the cops would come in, and the only reason the Rat didn't close down, Jim was telling me, was that most of the cops who were sent there used to go to the Rat when they were growing up. So they kind of respected the guy or whatever. But that's why no other clubs would dare to deal with all-ages shows. Once he closed the club down—"I'm sick of dealing with moms calling here looking for their 13 year old daughters, and the kids coming home drunk and the cops arresting them for doing this behind my club"—I still tried to book shows but gave up because it became such a headache. Hall shows...I tried the Middle East, the Kirkland Café...there were so many places and, after two shows, just the way kids act created problems. I don't want to sound like an asshole, but kids act ridiculous at shows. Whether it's drinking outside on the street or vandalizing the club, it's disrespectful. Some of the things the club owners or the hall owners do, you might not like, but if you want to have a show you have to deal with it. Nobody respects venues, even the good ones.
Paul: That's what the song "What Happened" is about, too. What happened to the people that were actually decent people who weren't fucking up the shows, who actually cared about stuff.

Al: A lot of them got disillusioned and moved on.

Paul: Well, I think they got run out by the idiots.
Mark: I still love Boston, but we have a new record coming out and we don't even have a show here because there's nowhere to play.
Paul: I'm not even really that sad that we're not playing here, because a lot of people in the Boston scene have turned their back on us, too. We get a lot of shit...I don't know why. We're not leaving Boston, but we're definitely not going to play shows if people don't appreciate it.

Al: Whatever happened to that plan that you and Sue [Paul's girlfriend] had to open an all-ages venue?

Paul: I posted a big explanation about it on a list awhile ago. There were many different reasons. A lot of it had to do with the fact that we came to the conclusion that no one would appreciate it anyway and it would probably get shut down. At that time there were hall shows that were getting shut down every weekend. Why should we even do this if it's not even going to be appreciated? Obviously, we'd be dumping a lot of our own money and time into it, and if it's just going to end up getting fucked up, it's not even worth it. Not to mention the fact that rents around here for apartments are ridiculous. You can imagine what it would be for a commercial space and everything that goes into it. If something appears or surfaces, where it looks like we can do shows in a space, of course we'd start doing it.

Al: You all talk about the disillusionment, but on "Something To Say" you state "I'm a punk and I've finally decided what it means to me." Why don't you elaborate on that point?

Paul: I think it's pretty self-explanatory. I think it's the listener's job to figure that out for themselves.
Scott: That's a serious cop-out! [laughter]
Paul: No it's not. I think that the person listening to the song is supposed to take it how they take it. The whole basis behind it is just being who you are and doing what you want to do. When it comes down to it, that's what it's all about. That's how I take it. Other people might take it differently.
Mark: To me, it's doing what you want to do, looking how you want to look. People might say it's dumb to spike your hair or dress in a certain way. One reason I do it is so that people know I'm a punk. I don't spend more than a half-hour getting ready, but the point is to just do what you want to do. To me, a big part of punk is going on tour and meeting people. How else can you travel and see the country or the world for, basically, very little of your own money? Sometimes I'll have to pitch in, but if we make enough money back the band will pay each person back. It's just a really good way to travel. You meet a lot of assholes, but you meet a lot of good people, too.
Paul: That song in particular is just saying how, for me at least, punk doesn't dictate who I am. I dictate what punk means to me. I don't follow punk's guidelines. I write the guidelines for myself.
Mark: There are already too many guidelines. Everyone goes through phases where they'll be into politics for awhile, then they're into a certain aspect of it, and then in two years half of those people aren't even punks anymore. I mean, you've been going to shows way longer than I have, but just since I started going to shows seven or eight years ago, there are so many people who are no longer around anymore. Even if they live here, they're not involved in punk. And it's crazy because those are the very same people who will talk the most shit about a band—"You guys sold out," etc. And then,

six months later, where the fuck are they?
Scott: They're wearing white belts and have become Mods now...for the moment.

Al: On that same song, there's a line, "Use destruction/it's the only way to pave salvation/but don't forget creation."

Paul: A lot of kids think it's punk and it's fun to be drunk and whatever, but there's also a big creative aspect of punk rock, too. If you're not out there doing something creative, what are you doing?

Al: Probably sitting around getting drunk, like an idiot.

Paul: Not that that's bad or wrong. Hell, I like to get drunk just as much as the next guy, but it's the kids that just do that that aren't contributing. Coming to shows, breaking stuff, getting drunk—why are they here? Why aren't they going to a Slipknot show or something like that? It'd be far more suitable for what they're into.

Al: You did almost a month-long tour in Japan. Tell me about that.

Mark: It was really weird. Everything over there—the houses are tiny. The kitchen of your house would be like a whole house where you stay in Japan. We were on tour with this band Shitfaced and we had a couple of drivers. We would go to houses and they would have to sleep in the car because there wasn't enough room in the house for more than four people. We would feel so bad, and they would to, "no, no, you're our guest... you must stay in the house." It was weird. Everything's really expensive. And only being able to talk to the same four people—after awhile, you start to go nuts. Like, can I have another friend, please? Some people over there could speak English, but it would be such broken English when you'd have half a conversation with them. "Gang Green, Gang Green, Slapshot." Boston is most famous over there for Slapshot and Gang Green.

Al: Are the scenes over there as factionalized as here? I know the street punk thing is big, then you have the thrash scene or the crazy-sounding hardcore bands. But is it as separated?

Scott: The scenes are really, really divided, even more so than here.

I'D GO SEE AGNOSTIC FRONT OR WRECKING CREW OR SLAPSHOT. THERE WEREN'T BIG SPIKY-HAIRED PUNK BANDS. SO WE WERE INFLUENCED BY A LOT OF EARLY BOSTON STUFF.

Mark: A lot worse than here. But everybody over there is so respectful and so much nicer. People ride their bikes to the store and don't lock them up because people don't steal there.

Paul: We brought someone with us to film the tour and make a documentary, and even though he left his camera at the bar they saved it for him. That would never happen here. It'd be gone in a second.

Mark: It's just weird. The people were so nice and so respectful, but their scenes didn't intertwine. There were a few crust-type punks at our shows because our first couple of records had a lot of political lyrics. Here we bring in street punks and political punks, but over there it was really big mohawk punks. There would be a few political punks, but the hardcore scene and the crust scene are a lot more divided there. Aus-Rotten was going over there and the guitarist from Tom and the Boot Boys was in America. We were all hanging out after a show and Aus-Rotten said "we'd love to play with you." He goes, like, "I'd love to play with you guys, too, but it wouldn't really



work." The scenes are so divided there.

Al: That's just ridiculous. I mean, I listened to your record this afternoon back to back with a hardcore band called the Real Enemy. They're a thrashy hardcore band, but it's the same kind of energy and anger coming from both bands. There are just different hairstyles or whatever, and it's ridiculous to divide on that basis.

Paul: Thank you. I think a lot of the songs on our new record sound like hardcore-type stuff.

Al: I've always thought you guys had a hardcore thing in there. Because one of your biggest influences is obviously early 80's UK punk and, to me, that was hardcore.



Paul: Yeah. And also, growing up around Boston, when I first started going to shows, there wasn't really a "punk" scene. There was a "hardcore" scene, and I'd go see Agnostic Front or Wrecking Crew or Slapshot. There weren't big spiky-haired punk bands. So we were influenced by a lot of early Boston stuff.

Al: This is a story I'd like to hear. On the video of your tour with the Casualties and Violent Society [East Coat Attack], there was one scene where the roadie got his ass lit on fire and I believe you were the culprit, Mark.

Mark: This kid Joe was the Casualties' roadie. We were on tour for two months and, especially when you don't drink, you try to find something to do. We would just always play dumb jokes on each other. He was just sleeping, and me and Meggers from the Casualties got into this phase for awhile where we would light people on fire with hair spray. We went to a party with a bunch of Mods there, and we were lighting them on fire. He was sleeping, so we did it to him too. Afterwards I felt really bad, because I burned a hole in his pants and I guess I burned his ass a little bit too. It's just funny to see someone wake up that way.

Al: And with his ass is on fire. Did he try to get any revenge?

Mark: He said he was going to, but he never did.

Al: You'd better watch your back!

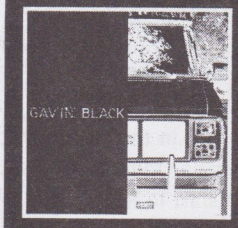
Scott: He was pissed when Meggers told him that Tripp tea-bagged him, even though he never really did.

Al: Tea-bagged?

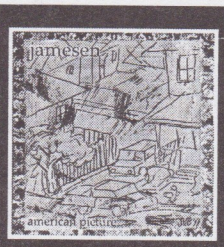
Mark: Put his balls in his mouth.
Scott: He didn't really do it, but he just told him that and he was so pissed.
Paul: You have to understand that the funnest part about touring is thinking of a new prank to pull on somebody.
Mark: I mean, there was us, the Casualties and Violent Society, plus a couple of roadies, so there were 19 of us for two months. There would always be something dumb happening, some third-grade prank that we'd all think was really funny at 2 in the morning.
Scott: That's what happens when you don't sleep a lot. You kind of start to lose it.
Paul: And we made the roadie lick bugs off our van. He got $20.
Scott: I would have done that for $20. That was the biggest broke tour, ever. No one had any money on them. You had to go through a line of like 12 people to get a smoke.
Paul: Did we tell you that we ran into the Japanese Yakuza, the mafia? Apparently, there was one of them at a show and he was pretty much taunting us. I don't know if it was because we were Americans, though. Maybe he was being a dick in general. But he ended up kicking Shinskei from Shitfaced right in the chest as hard as he could. Over here, if that happens and it's your friend, you stop the show, you stop playing. So we did that, and he got really offended and stormed out of the place or stormed into the back. Apparently, you're not supposed to do that because we offended his honor. Then we found out he was in the mafia.
Mark: He had just gotten out of prison for kicking the shit out of some girl, too.
Paul: So we had to rush out of the club.
Scott: That's like the time with the dudes in Oklahoma. These guys started a fight with Violent Society. This huge fight. The show was in a record store, and it went out onto the sidewalk and down the road. The guy who owned the record store said that that same guy had started a fight at some other show. There was a party afterwards, and he showed up with guns and shot up the place!
Mark: Then, five minutes later, they're circling around the club. There's a few carloads. We were all paranoid. We were backing the van up to the club.
Scott: They told us to back our van right up to the doors.
Paul: I was the most scared because I was the one who first hit the guy after it all went down.
Scott: We didn't feel like getting shot. A fistfight's one thing, but a bullet's another.

You can contact the band at the following address:

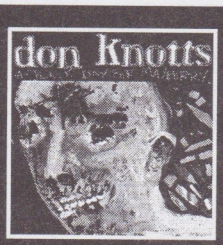
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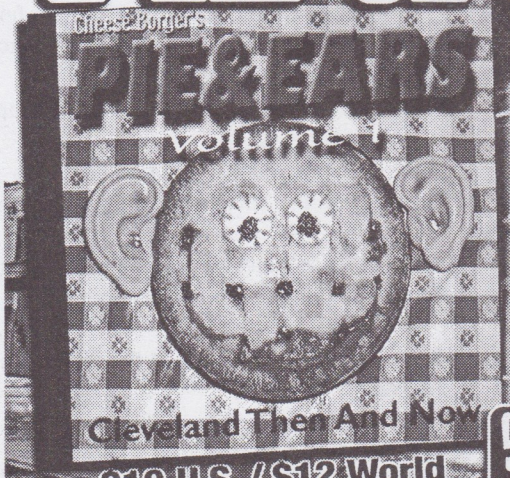
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HIT SQUAD

HOWDY HIPSTERS!

OK, so I missed, what, eight deadlines? They don't call me SLUG for nothing! But hereby, albeit reluctantly, I return from my self-imposed exile to reclaim my legitimate position on the forefront of knucklehead rock-'n'roll journalism, before leading mankind to the next stages of evolution. For this, you may express your gratitude to Professor Jeff Bale and Dimitri Monroe, by the way, since those gents are directly responsible for ushering me back to these here pages with their pleas for more of my ramblings and rantings, continuously grovelling for yours truly to continue writing for *Hit List* as their "Rock Man In Europe". Perty perty pleze, cherry on top. Well, OK then. No problem. I'm a nice guy. But it's been a while, so let's get (re)acquainted, just in case. First off :

WHENEVER YOU SEE MY HAPPY FACE...YOU KNOW YOU'RE IN FOR SOME SHIT!!

Yes, party people, I am the great Dutch Master, TONY SLUG, a.k.a. The Amsterdam Apeman, the Sultan of the Suds, the man, the myth, CRAFTER of RIFFS, and LOVER OF WOMEN! My powers include THE KOLIBRI DOWNSTROKE, THE DOUBLE FISTED CHUGALUG, and last but not least, THE MIST OF DESIRE. My mission is: to rock you silly AND TO SCORE WITH AS MANY HOTTIES AS I CAN!! With my band of rowdy gigolos, the legendary NITWITZ (established 1978), I bring to you the best in SLUGROCK classics, with each complimentary shock of our BIONIC COCKS leaving the intertwined ladies in the house on the



thresholds of G-Spot ecstasy. But even that ain't enough ROCK'N'ROLL for the ROCK'N'ROLL MANIAC that is the Slugster.

Therefore I also recently finished the second MASTERPIECE album with the HYDROMATICS (featuring Scott Morgan, interviewed elsewehere in this issue of *Hit List*). We went all over Europe with the fantabulous ZEN GUERRILLA and the mighty HELLACOPTERS last year, and will be touring across Europe again by ourselves this October. See you all there!

But sure, Europe's "Murder Capital" Amsterdam is still my natural habitat. Oh yeah, I own this town. Amsterdam is my bitch.

Excuse me for babbling such semi-deep contemplations about the 38-year long relationship with my quaint hometown — it's just that these profound, introspective thought processes made me realize that there's more to life than drinking beer, loud rock'n'roll music, and getting sloppy hummers from overstacked jiggle machines. 'Cause you see, these days I am a much wiser man indeed. I have trained, meditated, and built a support network for myself. As a result, I am EVEN LESS vulnerable now, and have found renewed focus in my life, mustering up strength from resources I never knew I had. But all humility aside, let's get on with the booty action you've been waiting for! So put the donkey in reverse as I quote Luke 4:16 by saying BACK THAT ASS UP for the fucking plot summary of your average ham' n' egger search for spiritual wisdom. Come to papa !

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HIT SQUAD

Ramone and Rik L. Rik have pogo'd their way up to the big headbanger in the sky recently, not to mention the fact that ALL of us will become plantfood at some point or another, this might be an appropriate occasion to drop 30 megatons of uncut, uncensored, and uncalled for T.R.U.T.H upon your cellulitic asses from high altitude regarding the age-old enigmas of LIFE and DEATH.

Now I just couldn't help but notice how all kinds of *Hit List* columnists try to be intellectual by quoting Napoleon or Nietzche or some other historical dipshit whose name starts with an "N", but the Slugman has VOWED ON HIS ENEMIES' GRAVES that he will ALWAYS keep it real. You will NEVER hear me say how relevant the works of Kurt Weill and Bertold Brecht are today. In fact, I'll go on record here by saying I'll take a bite out of a muledeer's ass before I'll talk Schopenauer, Kierkegaard, Sartre, Camus, Descartes or Heidegger with you, much less contemplate the works of that diaper-wearing kiddie molester Plato (After all, he's the guy who invented the Platonic relationship. I mean, HOW LAME is that?) As any punkrocker worth his or her salt should know, the question "Why do I exist?" has already been posed by the WEIRDOS on their fantastic 45 "Why Do You Exist?" back in the days when DEVO ruled the earth and Pac Man gobbled power pellets faster than your sister gobbled dick. But I digress.

I'll put your balls in a waffle iron and CLOGDANCE ON IT! I'll FUCK YOU IN THE ASS WITH A GLAZED HAM, BITCH.

Does all of this mean that life isn't worth living, you ask? Well, the puppy surprise is on me, dammit. I guess it looks good up front, but you know what they say, they fuck you at the drive-thru. Read on and learn from a true survivor. As a young boy, I thought it would be neat to get eaten by a Tyrannosaurus Rex. Through my depressive twenties, I got into that whole nihilistic bag and my view of death was a lot grimmer than before. Fortunately I was too busy listening to rock-'n'roll and getting laid to think about stuff like that too much, whereas other European bands of that particular era, (the Cheetah Chrome Motherfuckers, Negazione, and Declino, to name but a few) got into this whole Life Is Pain routine, which was taken to rather comical extremes by some. In retrospect, it probably (and thankfully) was the result of our Dutch upbringing that we always took that kind of Italian drama and pathos with a grain of salt.

Right now, I'm rapidly approaching the dreaded four zero, and rather than getting an unnerving image of myself being old and pathetic (as opposed to being young and pathetic, some might argue), I like to think my personality and outlook on life have matured a whole lot since then. See, I want my tombstone to read:

HERE LIES TONY SLUG — MOTHERFUCKER GOT HIT BY AN ASTEROID.

That's right, the ultimate way to "respect the rock." What better way to go than have a huge frozen clump of metal and rock twice the size of a football stadium plummet from the sky, and then go up in a fireball of twisted metal? Sweet! Not in some messy Princess Di or James Dean kind of way, mind you. Just gimme instant vaporization, like a fart bubble in a cannibals tub...A truly exciting conclusion to the life and times of Señor Slug! An event that people will talk about for years, even though the sun will rise the morning after, and elsewhere other knuckleheads will crawl from their beds or gutters with massive hangovers, and life will go on as always. (Unless the world *does* really end, in which case I'd feel like a royal ass for missing out).

The thing is, I firmly believe that one's life should be like a good (as in bad) movie. It should have some exciting parts, character development, plenty of hysterical dialogue, weird monsters leaping out at every turn when you least expect it, a cool surprise or two along the way, and some faaahn lookin' hotties worthy of my oily load. (Does T & A really matter all that much? The answer, my friends, is YES). Sure, a loud-ass soundtrack helps, but most importantly it should have a good ending. In udder woids, much like your mom's underwear, you get to see it all. So my advice for all you kids today is: try to make the movie of YOUR life a true kick in the jingle bells. You know, go out and do some crazy shit! Of course, your life doesn't have a rewind button — but if mine did, I'd back it up to Christmas of 1996 and have your cute tomboy girlfriend suck me off for that original DEEP WOUND 7" EP I bought for a mere $1.98.

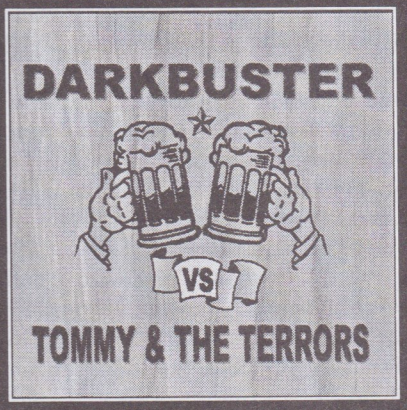
Speaking of which, shortly after my first (and only) column, I found my existance acknowledged BIG TIME by a dozen or so colon-rupturing *Hit List*-reading snot trolls who actually took the trouble to trace me down on the Internet and send me HATE MAIL, which, needless to say, made for mucho merriment at the secret SLUGSTAFFEL clubhouse where we sat down to read 'em all. I didn't really expect the lecturing some of you have been pleased to favour me with, but it's nice to know that someone cares. Peep this. 'Tis a well known fact that The Slugman is fluent in six or more languages (Hollandaise, Americana, Krautspeak, Jive, Honkese, and C++) and that makes me a polyglot, not "stupid", STUPID! So listen up 'cause here's what I polyglot for your fragile, sloped little ape heads to ponder.

As a kid I had no greater weapon than dog poo on a stick, but now I'm a fully grown Man. Like in the Bo Diddley song, spelled M-A-N. So the ONLY way I'm taking your anonymous lip is TO MY MANLY DICK, ya hear? If you want love and respect, go buy a FURBY, motherfuckers. Any violence offered to me I shall do my best to repel. FEAR MY WRATH, FOR I AM MIGHTY! You half-pint ass-goblins would need a STEPLADDER to kick my ass!! Wanna ride the Amsterdam Tower Of Powers merry-go-round of pain? I'll put your balls in a waffle iron and CLOGDANCE ON IT! I'll FUCK YOU IN THE ASS WITH A GLAZED HAM, BITCH. You're too big a pussy to handle such madness. And believe me, I do not refer to women as "pussy", unless they got 8 nipples and can lick themselves. Oh, so you were born in 1989? Um...just go to bed, kid.

However, if you'd like to send me a donation, kind words of encouragement, or your training bra, please do so at the following address:

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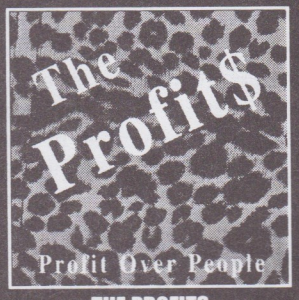
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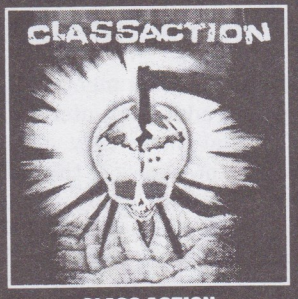
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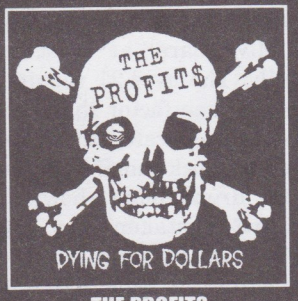
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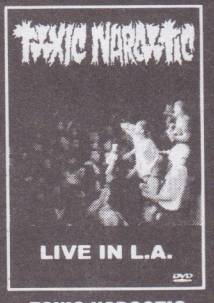
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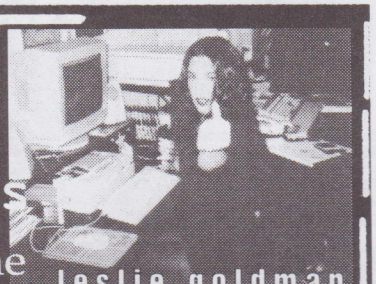
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leslie goldman

Do you ever find yourself watching something on TV that you really have no interest in? I do. And so it was that I happened to see our fair editor, Professor Bale, on VH1, looking all "intellectual" and basically explaining the punk ethos to the masses. (The show was actually about Green Day, so they certainly weren't gonna learn anything about that subject from the remainder of the program. By the way, I think I may have cornered the market as far as other columnists mentioning it, as I'm not sure anyone else is gonna admit to watching "Behind The Music".)

On that show they also talked about, and showed old footage of, shows at the Gilman Street Project, which made me reflect on going to punk rock shows when I was a teenager. Not only it dawn on me that has been a pretty long time since I've been a teenager, but also that it's been a fair amount of time since I've attended anything that could be categorized as a Gilman Street-type punk rock show. All the bands I want to see end up playing at dive bars, at least in Philly. The over-21 requirement is one factor that necessarily separates the "kiddie punk rock show" from the "loser drunk punk show". If I'm not mistaken, the last all-ages gig I went to was the "Rulebreakers Rule" event in 1996, a wrestling/rock show where bands played in between matches. The bands that played could be, and probably have been, categorized as punk rock — Antiseen, the Murder Junkies, and Rancid Vat — but it was really more of a spectacle than a typical punk rock show. One definitely got a little more bang for the buck than one would have seeing four hardcore bands play forty minute sets each on a lazy Sunday afternoon.

The other night I went to a bar and saw what was probably the best "punk rock show" I have seen in a long time.

The other night I went to a bar and saw what was probably the best "punk rock show" I have seen in a long time. It was held at the South Philly Tap Room, a small, non-descript neighborhood bar located, as the name would suggest, in South Philly. Three bands were on the bill, the Bad Vibes, the Party Wreckers, and Rancid Vat. This was interesting in and of itself, as many local bookers think that local bands "don't draw" and would never book three local bands on a Friday night without some sort of touring or out of town band on the bill. I should also point out that local bookers rarely, if ever, have the balls to book Rancid Vat at all, so the band doesn't play around here very often. Considering that a bar where they'd never played before was willing to have them, this alone qualified the Tap Room as the bar that has treated them best throughout their tenure here in Hostile City.

Anyway, I knew this was not going to be a typical night out at a Philly rock club before I even entered the bar. For one thing, the exterior immediately indicated that this was not a rock club. This was a bar, and a typical South Philly one at that — small, poorly lit, smokey, and crowded with people who mostly lived within walking distance. That was fine with me, although I definitely could have done without the smokey part. When we opened the door we were met with a face full of smoke, an earful of the Bad Vibes, and the curious looks of those seated near the entrance. Like I said, the place was filled with people who hang out there all of the time, and since I saw no stage or anything else that would give someone the impression that bands play there often, it would probably be safe to say that everyone who came to see the bands was part of the evening's entertainment for the regulars.

Another thing that set this gig apart from other local rock shows was that it was not a highly-publicized event. There were no listings in the local weeklies, and to my knowledge the club doesn't advertise. Therefore everyone in the room was either one of the locals, a member of one of the three bands, or dating/married to/sleeping with/friends with someone in one of the bands, which greatly cut down on the number of there-to-be-seen people who frequent the more popular rock venues. We made our way over to the other side of the bar, toward the area on the floor where the band was set up, and nestled into the corner in front of the Men's room and behind where Phil (aka Thee Whiskey Rebel, in case you weren't really paying attention) and Marla were sitting to take in the rest of the Bad Vibes' set. I'd never seen them before, although I was already digging them based on their contribution to the newest *Carbon14* 7" and a tape of their demo which Larry had gotten. I didn't actually get to see them that night either — a wall and a number of tall bar patrons blocked my view — but they sounded really good. There was no between-song banter — the next two bands would make up for that — or filler during their set, except for a few technical difficulties that, considering the circumstances, were easily ignored. It was just straightforward loud, hard, and fast punk rock.

Between bands I hung out with Marla and just kinda soaked in the ambience, if you will. Larry and I used to live in South Philly, although not quite as far south as this, so I felt comfortable there even though we weren't regulars. The bartender, who I found out later was the owner's wife, seemed completely non-plussed by the goings-on; live music or not, it was just another Friday night of pulling beers for her. Next up was the band I knew the least about, the Party Wreckers. I had heard a rumor prior to the show that the flyers billed it as the Bad Vibes vs. the Party Wreckers, but had no idea what that was about. I didn't see anything competitive other than some good-natured shit-talking between the respective

LESLIEGOLDMAN

camps. That may have constituted fightin' words in another city, but here in Hostile City it was just friendly chit-chat. You could say that the Party Wreckers' set was antithetical to the Bad Vibes though, since it was loose and sloppy and chock full of between-song banter, beer tossing, and other forms of audience participation. Their frontman Eric, who is also the newest drummer for Rancid Vat, took the opportunity (while he had control of the mike) to sling a little affectionate shit-talk in the direction of RV's frontman, the Cosmic Commander of Wrestling, and to repeatedly mention that his band was from Levittown, Pennsylvania. I had no idea what that was all about, but they were actually quite entertaining and emitted that "we-don't-give-a-fuck-what-you-think-of-us" vibe that I find very charming in a band.

After sucking in some much needed non-Marlboro filled air, it was back inside for the main event. Rancid Vat hadn't played in Philly since Halloween and we were out of town then, so I hadn't actually seen them play since the 2000 Supershow — too long, in my opinion. I always enjoy an opportunity to see them live, and as we would all soon see it would prove to be a very interesting set. Not that they're capable of playing any other kind. It started off innocently enough, as it always does; the owner/soundman seemed a little perplexed by the band, but was not yet alarmed by what he saw. Somewhere around the third song, it seemed like that was about to change. I couldn't actually see what happened next because I was standing behind a friend of ours, Johnny Casino, who is about a head taller and a bit wider than me; what I did see was a flailing arm, which based on the type of shirt sleeve I figured must be that of the Cosmic One, and then I heard a loud bang. (For those of you who have never seen Cosmo in rock mode, it should be said that although he is bereft of almost all sense of rhythm, he has never let that stop him from shaking his now relatively svelte money-maker, and that when it comes to stage presence he has few peers. Back to our story.) It turned out that Cosmo was just doing his normal bit, grooving and testifying as only he can. Due to the very small size of the room and even smaller amount of space for the band to play in, he fell ass first into Jimmy Satan's amplifier, knocking it over and rendering it useless. (I later heard that what really happened was that, while he was grooving he almost fell into Eric's drum kit; in an effort not to knock that over, he tried to propel himself backwards and instead ended up crashing into the amp and taking it out of commission.)

This was followed by that which could only have followed such a happening — the audience hooted and hollered, and Cosmo mouthed off about what a dump the bar was, how it was all Jimmy's fault for putting the amp where it was, etc. I know quite a few bands that would have, faced with the same circumstances, either called it a night or degenerated into crying and/or fist fighting for real (possibly all three), but Phil and Marla have been playing together for two decades in this band and they've played as a four-piece with Cosmo plenty of times over the years. So apparently, losing one of two guitarists during the set didn't seem to be enough of a reason to stop. All this happened so fast that the details are fuzzy. I think they played another song, while Jimmy stood front and center in the audience and pouted in Cosmo's direction for full effect. During that song Cosmo's mike was either accidentally or purposely cut off. This was followed by more yelling back and forth between Cosmo and Jimmy, and more verbal venue-bashing from Cosmo. At that point I think the owner was ready to call it a night. In the semi-silence I heard him say something like "Look, you don't have a guitarist and you're insulting my bar. You really think I'm gonna let you keep playing?" In truth they still did have a guitarist — they'd started off with two and had only lost one — but the guy couldn't really see Marla because the band area was so small and awkward that she was standing on the other side of a wall. As is typical of his patois, Cosmo managed to smooth the situation out in short order, turning it around by saying things like "Look at me, dude. Are you really taking a guy like me seriously?," "We're just having some fun," etc. To the owner's credit, he agreed to laugh it off and let the band finish out their set.

Musically, this might not have been Rancid Vat's best performance ever, but as far as entertainment value you couldn't have paid your way into a more entertaining show in Philly that night. (Oh yeah, the show was free.) It was a breath of fresh, albeit slightly toxic, air, one that this city's musical landscape so desperately needs, but sadly only a few got to partake of it. On our way home, Larry and I both agreed that expecting to see anything that boundlessly fun and free of inhibition or constraint at the West Philly all-ages venue that claims to be the only place to see punk shows in town would be as naive as the kids who only look for it there. I guess that the moral of this story is that by not attending all-ages "kiddie punk shows," I'm probably not missing out on anything after all. ⊕



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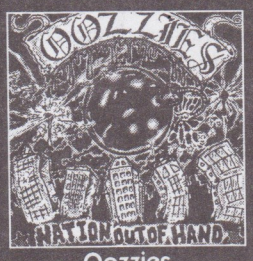
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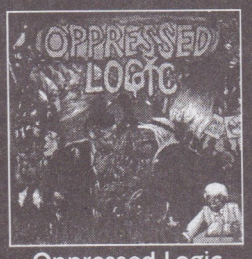
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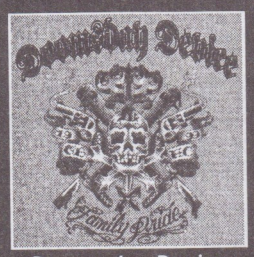


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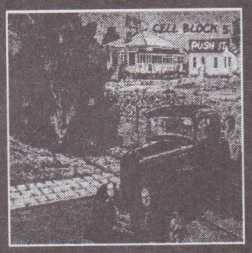


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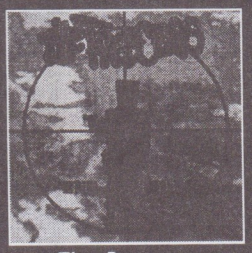
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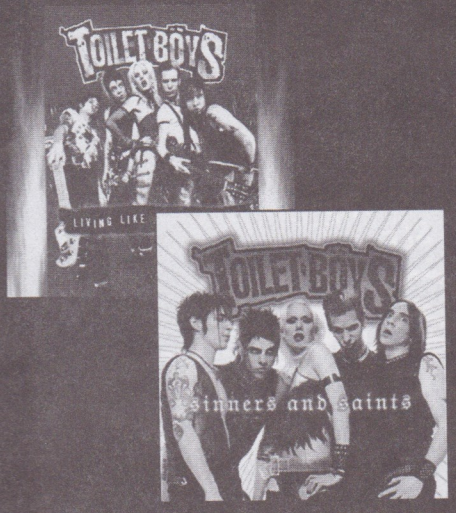
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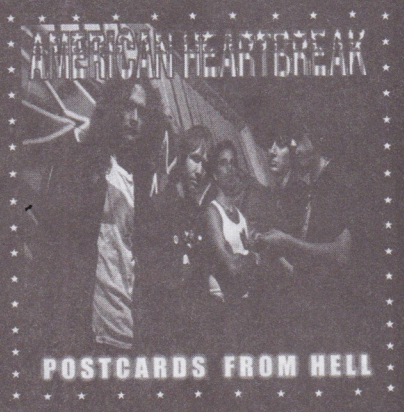


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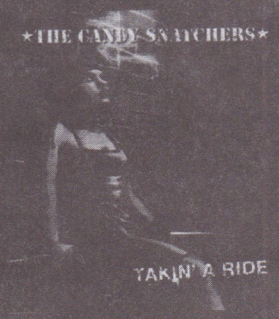
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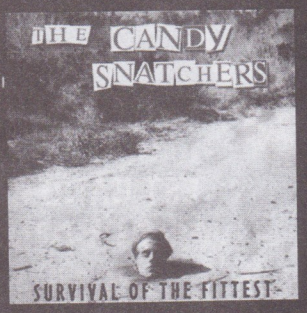
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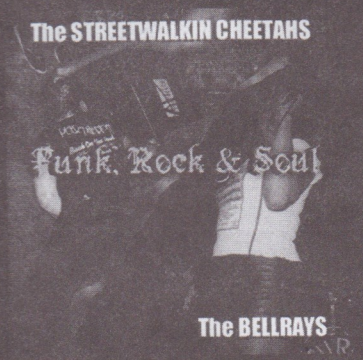
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MONSTER MAGNET

BY THE SLÉAZEGRINDER

"I WAS GONNA MAKE, IN MY ROOM ON A 4-TRACK, THE GREATEST BAND IN THE WORLD. IT'D INVOLVE THE STOOGES, MIXED WITH HAWKWIND, WITH A DOSE OF MEGA-PSYCHEDELIA. AND I GOTTA GET THIS STUFF FROM SOMEWHERE, SO I'LL TAKE THE STORIES FROM MY DRUG YEARS AS A TEENAGE SUBURBAN...YOU KNOW, A STOOGES -STYLE PUNK, NOT A 'PUNK' PUNK, DRIVING AROUND IN A MUSCLE CAR WITH LONG HAIR, BUT NOT BEING HIPPIES. THAT'S WHERE IT ALL CAME FROM. DUDE, I NEVER EXPECTED THAT SHIT TO FLY..."

You can call Dave Wyndorf a rock star all you want, accuse him of debauchery and excess bordering on the paranormal, and he won't even cop a plea. But one thing you can't call him is a sell-out. Sure, Monster Magnet might be the favorite sons of the rock'n'roll brotherhood, the only cats with bottles of decent champagne to bust over your head, but Monster Magnet's inexplicable success has more to do with the kids in the street than the cats in the head office.

You know, I think the new album's title, 'God says No', is the first time you've ever admitted that there's a power greater than Monster Magnet.

"Yeah, there is, and it's the record industry and the advertising executives. They're killing me. All my time is spent trying to subvert these motherfuckers on a daily basis."

No, the reason Monster Magnet is where they are is because of the spark that flares up deep in the hearts and groins of every teenage loser when a record like 'Dopes To Infinity' or 'Power Trip' starts to spin on a cheap-assed ghetto blaster out in the woods somewhere amidst cheap beer, cheaper pot, and hopeless crazy talk that doesn't seem so fucking crazy anymore when Wyndorf exclaims, with all authority, "Well I died a million times, and I choose my culture well, and I'll build myself again, and you can all go straight to hell!" The acid metal guitars swirl with superhuman electricity and satanic bombast. " I'm never gonna work another day in my life, I'm way too busy power tripping!" Cue the thunderous applause for the greasy-haired motherfucker in the leather pants who just achieved that rarest of rock-'n'roll's magic tricks...transcendence. Maybe you're still a loser, but at least you don't feel like one anymore, and that's half the battle.

Earlier this year, Magnet Honcho Wyndorf had a brilliant idea about how to follow up 1998's gold record "Power Trip", an album he wrote in self-imposed exile in Las Vegas, a silent observer in a sea of neon, greed and madness. This time he planned on taking his act to America's version of 'The ending of all things' – Vietnam. He'd sweat out the heat and disease of the napalmed jungles, write the fucking record, and come back a disgraced anti-hero, just like Martin Sheen in "Apocalypse Now". Well, it worked in theory, anyway. "The thing about Vietnam is, they don't really like Americans." Especially long-haired ones. "I had a drug record from a while ago, so they didn't want to let me in. It came down to, 'OK, we'll let you in, but you've got to pay us this much money'...it became cost-prohibitive, so I couldn't do it." As the Backyard Babies say, "Plan B is just so unfair". "I had 6 months to put this record together, and I spent most of the time recreating tout scenarios at motels on the weekends." Not so suddenly, the time to hesitate was through. "If you want to know what kind of force I was channeling to write this record, it's pretty simple – I had a deadline. I sat down and wrote the whole record in a week, walking around with a notebook, scribbling stream-of – consciousness lyrics."

Despite its hastily constructed conception, the end result, "God Says No", is state of the art Monster Magnet, a filthy, swaggering monolith of all things rock. Time to hit the road with this bitch. Although



Buckcherry and Fu Manchu were both in the running to join the campaign to save rock and roll, ultimately, the biggest guns of all were called upon – the Cult. Together, they're spreading the heavy gospel nationwide in a quest for fire that might never stop burning. As the rejuvenated Ian Astbury announced at the Cult's comeback gig at South by Southwest earlier this year, "You now have permission to rock again".

WHY RECORD LABELS AND NU-METAL SUCKS, PART 666

"Where the fuck are we? We gotta get out of California, man." The illustrious Dave Wyndorf called me from a payphone somewhere on the West Coast in early June to testify on the glory of rock and the miracle of pussy…

What kind of benefits do you get from being on a major label?

Tour support, which keeps you on the road longer than you deserve to be, because you're not making the money yourself, distribution…you get your stuff distributed to a lot more places than if you were on an independent. That's about it.

Well, has it made you a millionaire yet?

No. Definitely not, we don't have those kind of sales. I've made and spent millions keeping Monster Magnet alive, though. It's like, I have a decision to make. I can take the money, or I can put it back into the band and continue the crusade. If we sold 12 million records, than I'd be a millionaire, but Magnet's only sold about a million worldwide. That's not a lot…I mean, it's enough for me, fuck yeah, but a millionaire? No. But God help everybody if I become a millionaire because the show's gonna look like "Apocalypse Now"…helicopters flying down and strafing the audience…

I wonder if, operating on your level, it's hard to stay cool…like do the record company types ask you to do stupid shit that you would never do yourself?

They do, and right now is prime time for Monster Magnet to get shot down. As soon as you climb up a rung of the ladder, they expect more from you. Right now, my record company expects more than we've had to give them before, and gives us less support at the same time. If you have some success, they just expect you to hold it. So instead of, "Yeah, let's push this 'space-Stooges' thing," they figure, "Well, they got this far, let's see where they get." It's the kind of thing that usually ends with the band getting dropped. The labels are usually only good for a couple of albums. The cool thing is, though, that we've already established a Monster Magnet franchise, you know? I can take this band anywhere. We can set up camp anywhere in the world and continue on, whether we get dropped or not.

That's true, man, whatever ugly trend is going on, Monster Magnet will still have fans - the real 'Rock' fans.

Yeah, that's good to know. Man, I wish more bands would get it, that rock can be a happy

"WELL, IT'S FLATTERING. I THINK I MIGHT'VE INVENTED THE TERM "DRUG ROCK" FROM THE FIRST COUPLE OF SINGLES, YOU KNOW, "IT'S A SATANIC DRUG THING, YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND."

thing, you know? You don't have to be a pussy to play rock. Your decadence should be taken with a smile, or else it's not really decadence. I mean, I'm not in this life to be fucking tortured. I deal with my demons, get them out through my music, and get on with my shit, and I wish to hell other bands would understand that. But right now, rage is the order of the day. I don't know, maybe that's what the kids are really all about, but...

Naw, I don't think it's all that honest. We grew up in much harsher circumstances than all these bands whining about their lives today.

That's absolutely true. I mean when you're fat and happy, if you're white and living in America, you just don't have it that bad. "Oh, there's too much information, and my parents don't care about me", even that starts snow-balling because the kids start lessening their defenses because the media tells them to. They start thinking they have the right to complain – "issues, I have issues" – until finally, they don't even know what it's like to go, "Alright, this is fucked," and get up and do something about their lives.

STARTED HUMPING VOLCANOES, BABY, WHEN I WAS TOO YOUNG

There are those that would say that Monster Magnet invented "Stoner Rock". Is that something you'd want to be responsible for?

Well, it's flattering. I think I might've invented the term "Drug Rock" from the first couple of singles, you know, "It's a satanic drug thing, you wouldn't understand." And we went around with this psychedelic light show, yelling "Everybody eat LSD!", but the actual sound of Stoner Rock? I'd say that was Kyuss.

You know who I thought had the sound first, though? Raging Slab.

Fuck, that's right...

But you guys were always the "flagship" stoner band.

That's because we flew the banner high. We took our cues from the Butthole Surfers, Spacemen 3, and Loop. I never knew that there was a market for stuff like this, I mean I was in a punk band, and I quit, and I was just listening to those "Nuggets" records, and all of a sudden, there was Mudhoney, Screaming Trees, early Soundgarden, the Cult...the Cult was the only real rock band to come out of the 80's, probably the only real rock band since the 70's. I mean, everybody else was all grindcore or thrash metal, but the Cult was like classic rock. So they were a huge influence, and so was Zodiac Mindwarp.

Right the fuck on, brother.

Zodiac – those guys held the fucking line, man, when everything else was tumbling down. And then, when everything started happening in Seattle, it looked like it was gonna be fucking great. Of course, it all collapsed within four years, but it really looked like rock was back. Even early White Zombie, not the music as much, but the look – I mean, I think it was understood that what was cool about punk, what was cool about old rock, and what was not cool about the current state of rock, which was corny head-stocks and stupid hair, but that's a fragile little line. The mass audience doesn't understand that line, but guys like Mark Arm from Mudhoney did. And I think all those bands in Seattle were a lot more influenced by the Cult then they wanted to admit, because they were so self-conscious about fucking everything. So we're happy as shit to be doing this tour.

This tour kinda feels like a campaign.

Oh, it's definitely a campaign, and Ian Astbury knows it, too.

That's cool, man, because he weirded me out with that techno solo record.

I know, (laughs) but when you do this stuff, and you do a bunch of records that don't do so well, you have to do something else as an artist, or you'll go crazy. You can't even see the forest from the trees when you're in them, and it's really easy for us to stand back and go, "Oh, the Ian Astbury record sucked," or whatever, but he had to do something, rather than nothing, or he never would have come back. You gotta keep mixing it up, and he had to go around that bend to go, "OK, I can do Cult songs again."

What's the stage show like this time around?

Well, because of the situation with the Cult, it's all about engaging the audience this time out. With those guys headlining, we just don't have enough room for a big set. Usually we've got fire, shit blowing up, psychedelic light shows...I'm really into plat-

forms lately, you know climbing onto them and jumping off.

The "Power Trip" tour had a lot of naked chicks on stage.

You've got to go with what's cheap and available…the "Power Trip" record was almost burlesque, you know? Like, "Give me sex, give me drugs, give me money," and everything just seemed to fall into place. The girls just started showing up, and they obeyed the record, you know? They'd show up and go, "I want to get naked!" and I'd say, "Get up there." Next thing you know, they're doing live sex shows on stage. It was very cool.

Were these chicks that showed up along the way?

Just chicks that showed up and wanted to dance, man.

Because I had this vision that you had a separate tour bus just for the strippers.

If I could have, I would have. I'd talk about that every day. But you know, the real people are even better than the strippers. Real girls will go for months or years waiting for that moment to go absolutely ape-shit. And then, all of a sudden, here we are…

SILVER FUTURE

You think you'll ever write a book?

I'll probably write a bunch of stuff, at the end of it, you know.

How would you approach it? Like, the true story of Monster Magnet?

Real life stuff, just jazzed up. As far as writing goes, I just never had the patience to sit and write for a long time. That's why I like rock and roll, because you can do everything all at once. You can be a writer, a musician, a producer – I just got to do some producing, and it was awesome – but with the writing, it would be my emotions, tied to other people's stories that I've heard. If it was about me pouring my guts out, though, I don't think I'd be ready for that right now. But I'm not in a wheelchair yet. That's the kind of stuff you do when you're down. If you get shot or something, then you're ready to pour it out. So I got time. And I'm still gaining experience – this thing has gotten more weird, incrementally, as it goes on. It's just like, "Oh my God, what the fuck is going on now?" From the Hollywood people, who live up to the cliches 100%, to record company people and promoters, everybody just steps up to the plate and bats a fucking thousand, and I'm always like, "Holy fuck, what a character!" Everywhere we go it's like that. I have enough stories to fill three notebooks, and everyday there's more. And I don't forget any of this shit, either. That's why I think it's cool that the lyrics are ambiguous, I can tell them again, and they'd be brand new."

What about other non-Magnet schemes?

Producing records, other people's records. I want to produce some pretty music with girls. It's the one thing I don't do.

Make pretty music?

I try to make pretty music sometimes, but it kind of falls flat, the voice, y'know. But I'd love to get in the studio and produce some good music. Whether it'd be commercial or not, that's another story.

How about directing? Did you direct the "Space Lord" video?

No, it was directed by this guy, Joseph Cahn. I called up Hype Williams, he's a big rap video director, and I told him that I wanted to make a rap video for Monster Magnet, and he said, "Well, I don't do white people."

Really?

Swear to God. Pretty cool, right? And he said, "But my director of photography, he knows exactly what I do, he can do it." So I called up Joseph, and he goes, "Absolutely, that's a great idea, where do you want to do it?" I said, "Vegas. I want to shoot it on the Vegas strip. I want every rap cliché you can imagine, but I still want it to be rock. That's a fine line, and I'm gonna trust you with that." Like, I wanted a muscle-car instead of a Mercedes, stuff like that. And he took it from there. And what he did, I didn't even know this, he swiped his own video. He shot a Maze video in the same spot, so he ripped himself off. So anyway, that was the extent of my directing – "Put this here, put that there." Pretty easy. That was all just about making a commercial that people would watch.

Did you feel pressured to come up with an equally extravagant video for the latest single, "Heads Explode"?

I did that. I went to LA to shoot one, and the director was just totally out of gas, it was like "Spinal Tap". Bad girls, man, bad looking women. My management did some deal with *Playboy* where they were going to be totally naked, but they were like, Miss September 1982, or something. (laughs) So, I didn't like it. I scrapped the whole thing, I was like, "This is not what I'm paying for." It sent us into a video tail spin, so I made a really cheap video, but MTV ain't buying no rock these days, unless it's the bad stuff, so…if the record does really well, I'll do another big video, if it doesn't, fuck 'em. It doesn't matter anyway, it's like a moot point. When MTV came along, suddenly the rock was all about the image. It used to be that stuff like magazine articles were really important, now all that's out the window. Now it's just like, "Do you look good? Because it's more important to look good than to sound good." So fuck those guys.

Monster Magnet has a song on the "Heavy Metal 2000" soundtrack. What'd you think about the way that turned out?

Ugh! I was not happy, not smiling. The only reason I did that thing was because I got to work with Bob Ezrin, the guy who produced the first Alice Cooper records, Kiss…that's why I took that job, not because of the movie, just because I got to be in the studio with him for two days, and I got to ask him about what it was like to produce "The Ballad of Dwight Frye". It was pretty great. Otherwise, that movie was a piece of shit.

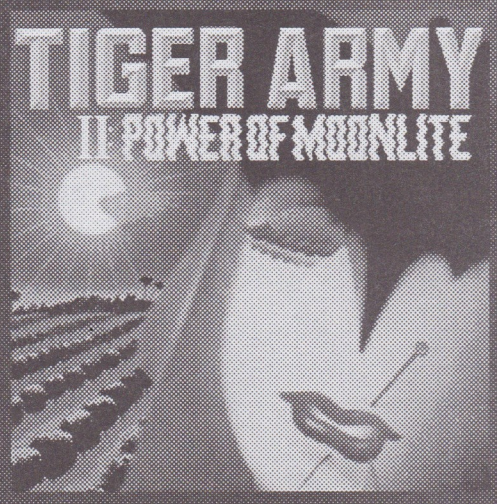
And the rest of the soundtrack was all nü-metal.

You know what, though? On something like a soundtrack, I don't mind mixing it up with the nü-metal guys, because some kid's gonna buy that record, and he's going to be so fucking sick of that shit, and he'll hear Monster Magnet and go, "Finally, some real rock."

Amen to that, brother Dave. As we speak, the Cult/Monster Magnet Real Rock Resurrection Train is rolling across the globe. Find out where you can hop on at www.monstermagnet.net

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THE BEGINNING OF THE END:

Mark DeVito

OK. Got a blank page and Brett tells me if I don't come up with an article soon, he's gonna strike me from the list. So, got the pot of coffee on the stove, am hungover just enough to read the crap I'm typing, and got nothing else on my plate for the day. What shall we discuss? Heavy metal and the state of it today? How about the reason I'm listening to mostly old crap these days? If we need to, I'll pull no punches and get right to the point. Don't make me get up. I mean it. I will if I have to. See, punk, I ain't 'fraid of nobody. Yeah, whatever. Metal is in a fucked-up place right now, and I'm afraid that we're all going to hell in a hand cart with stupid sticks up our asses and hats that read "DUH?!" on the brim. Mine is bright red and used to be my pop's, but he's got a new one that's blue and made of wool. Whadya mean you don't know what the fuck I'm talking about? Pay the fuck attention, dickweed, and get the man goo outchyour ears. I'm talking about metal, dude!

Now, before you get your Hot Topic panties up in a bunch, there are a few exceptions..Very few. Locally, we have a few main bands that are straight up and got their shit going on. ZEROBULLSHIT kick your mother's ass and leave your father in the driveway crying. Their debut, "A Moment Of Silence", will tear the flesh right off your skull and have you asking the musical question, "Where the fuck did I leave my beer?" They put it out themselves, and it sounds like rolling thunder in your head. Honest and ripping, these guys put the shit down and it speaks volumes of truth. I mean, you can have a beer with these guys, not like some bands out there hanging with their bodyguards and stiffing up the bar with that "What the fuck do you want?" look on their mugs. I want to get around your stupid ass and get a drink, motherfucker. Oh yeah, next time you see 'em, give Rich a Lemmy guitar pick, and the rest of the set will be Motörhead covers. Guar-un-tee. Or at least, Lemmy's lyrics set to KISS tunes. Bottom line is this is what hard music should sound like. It's no frills, kick-in-your-face, hard-punching riff rock. Screw that overproduced slop that is seeping out of these major label nutjobs.

So, the stuff that mostly gets me off now is finding out that some of these labels are putting the good older shit out on CD. That warms my heart. I ain't going to the Papa Roach show for 60 bucks when I can kick it on the couch hitting bong loads and spinning the Gang Green, Exodus, and Excel re-issues that I've been findin'. Screw Korn right in their squirrly little asses. I got the misfortune of meeting those guys at a Rob Zombie gig, and that jackass whiteboy with the little dreadlocks and sunglasses, looking like Corey Hart and Bo Derek's aborted fetus, had an ego that two roadies would have a hard time packing into a ten foot-Anvil case. Don't get too big for your pantaloons just yet, my little Rastafarian popsqueek. 'Cause, sooner than you can say, "You want me to super size that?", you'll be tuckin' those dreads up inside a paper hat and crying for your roadie into a headset that don't reach that soundboard no more. Yeah, I'm talking to you. You too, Papa Roach. And someone get Linkin Park off that jungle gym, it's bedtime for kiddie rock. Man, when did music get so fucking bad? Shit, even my old Krokus albums are better than this crud. Just wait a year and all those albums will be three bucks in the budget bin. Guar-un-tee.

I heard some other stuff from a label called Nuclear Blast these past couple of months, and I gotta say this label hits more homers than any other for Metal right now. Sure, Sanctuary Music is doing great things (Halford's new one, Maiden, and others), but Nuclear Blast has the shit. Everything from SINNER to WHITE SKULL kicks major bootay. I got a promo of SYNERGY about a year ago, and I still listen to it once a week. This label is the Metal Blade of today. I will buy/try anything on that label just to avoid getting roped into the major label claptrap of pop-metal drivel. SLIPKNOT are cool just because they're kids with masks and they mess things up a bit. I respect that.

Have you noticed how much the big stadium shows bite so heavily now? They used to be *the* shit, now they just are shit. Saw that Metallica "Summer Sanitation" shite last year. Talk about doing it FOR the kids. More like doing it TO the kids. $75 bucks a seat, awful sound, 7-dollar beers, and you had to sit through Korn-holes' set. I lucked out and got a pass into the free beer tent, so that was cool. But that was the coolest part of the show. Save your dough for the next time Metallica wanna do something for YOU. I liked Metallica, so what do I do now? I bought the "Garage, Inc." album and said goodnight. End of story. You don't need nuthin' else.

Feel like hearing me bitch? I thought not. OK. Have you heard the new HALFORD disc, "Resurrection"? Well, go out an' get it now so you can be reborn. This is one of the mightiest returns of metal that I've come across in a long time. Halford starts out belting out his brain-splitting high-pitched screams, chanting out the title of the album and first song, and suddenly, like a charging army over a hill, the guitars come in full speed ahead. This whole album rips, but the first track reminds me of the triumphant return of AC/DC when "Back in Black" was released. It's not destined to be as classic as that one, but it's just as strong an effort. With the speed and drive of "Painkiller", "Resurrection" delivers the goods with catchy, memorable riffs and songs, and Halford's voice is as strong as ever. Plus, if anyone ever looked like Anton LeVay, it's Halford now. I missed him at the Maiden show, but I've been told he will return to the Bay Area on his own headlining tour soon, so I will wait patiently. Have some fun and don't take things so damn seriously. Really.

Do you like Mercyful Fate? Well, you should. Fuck, *I* do. I think my article is starting to sound like a couple of kids in the back of the school bus talking about cartoon shows. Sorry 'bout that. Anyway, I think Mercyful Fate is fucking great. I found a copy of "Melissa" the other day, and it blows everything away. Really. I mean, "Don't Break The Oath" is a great album, too. Don't get me wrong. But "Melissa" is a shredder. Found an old UGLY AMERICANS album, too. Fucking great stuff. All that shit, man. Exodus, Beowolf, Excel, Gang Green, Savatage, Exciter, Possessed, Angelwitch, Loudness, and Venom. It makes you wonder if all that crap that's out now will stand the test of time like those guys. Doubt it. A few, maybe. Whatever happened to the Slambodians?

Damn if that wasn't the best band in town. *Guar-un-tee*.

Whatever happened to all the good puke stories that you used to hear? I mean, *really* good ones. Like one time at Ozzy, I saw at least *20* people spew chunks, and some were so memorable they were *noteworthy*. *Really*. I saw this one guy lean over the railing in the second level and puke all over the metal walkway that ran between the levels. Right after that, this kid was running down the ramp, hit that puke puddle going at least thirty, and slipped in it like a cartoon. I mean, his feet flew out in front of him, ass in the air, and landed flat on his back right in the goop. Now, he landed so hard that some of it splashed up and rained down on top of him, splashing his chest and face. This grossed him out so bad - not to mention all of us watching this new sport - that he started puking, only straight up in the air - and then had *HIS* puke rain down again on top of himself. What fun! Then, as if that wasn't good enough, I saw a guy and a chick making out, both must've been hammered, and she looked green as hell. Well, you guessed it, she pukes in his mouth. Sprays right out of each side of their locked mouths like a sprinkler lawn toy made by Whammo, so he stands up, looks at her, spits out the chunks that didn't make it past the lips, then pukes right down on top of her head. He's so drunk that when he finishes, he wipes his mouth on his sleeve and sits right back down in his puke-soaked chair and passes out. She's sitting there crying and trying to comb the puke out of her hair with this big candy-red comb, every once in a while leaning over a bit to dry heave and gag up a few leftover bits and pieces. Yum! Then, I see this big muther-fucker standing in front of a little guy, and sure enough, the little dude yaks up his lunch all down this guy's back. Needless to say, he starts to beat the crap out of him, only to get puked on all down the front of him. Some people just don't learn. There was your normal, "Oh, look over there. He's gonna...wait for it....oh....YES! Right into the trashcan! Nice shot." But the special ones, you never forget. Ah, memories.

Hey! This is what headbangers talk about, man. Fuck, I ain't changin' just for a fucking article. I was listening to that Halen album where Roth sez "Eddie?" and then the solo starts and you can hear Roth going "thank you" right after that. That is *so* fucking cool, man. I was at that Scorps/Maiden/Girlschool show back in '82, and Maiden were kicking ass. They ended a blistering set, and then it was time for the Scorps. Klaus comes out while they start ripping into their set with "Blackout", lifts the mike to his mouth and...FUCKING NOTHING, MAN! Not a peep. Mike wasn't even plugged in. Boy, did that suck. Saw George Thorogood on the Stones' "Tattoo You" tour and it was the first time George had ever been on a big stage (him being a club band-type and all). Well, old George saw Mick's giant ego ramps and decided to grab his guitar and run right out onto one, get the crowd going first thing, ya know? Well, he makes it about half way when he stops short and you hear the loudest crash and feedback scream you ever would. He only had a 30-foot patchcord for his geetar and pulled his goddamn Marshall stack right over. Ooops.

Okay, I'm REALLY getting off the track now. Who wants to go drinking? Man, I do. I'll meet anyone down at the Silver Lion/Biggums anytime for a drink. I'll call up my buddy Kelly, the king of beeers, and we'll toss a few back. Whaddya say? Come on! Maybe after the article. I know, I know! I said I'd finish this thing, and I will. Quit fucking pestering me. Sheesh, just like a mom. What else should we discuss? I mean, what kinda crap do you wanna read from me? Ain't no "discussions" going on here. I heard that Sleazegrinder guy quoting Zodiac Mindwarp. Fucking greatest band in the fucking world! Really. They were doing that look WAAAYY before Zombie was. Zody was the original. I saw those guys at the Stone in S.F. right before they got on the Iron Maiden/G n' R tour back in '87. They rock so heavily. "PRIME MOVER", BABY!!!!

THE MOST IMPORTANT METAL ALBUMS IN MY HOUSE

25. SAVATAGE - "Sirens" (1983) When this album came out, it blew our minds. So much brilliant riffing, accompanied by shredding and shreaking vocals that didn't make you wince with embarrassment, like so many other groups. It was a monster of a debut album and was immediately welcomed into the metal scene as a classic. Florida had produced a mighty adversary to represent metal from an unlikely area. Sheer brilliance.

24. ZODIAC MINDWARP & THE LOVE REACTION - "Tattooed Beat Messiah" (1987) Now, I gotta say that here was a band that came out right in the middle of the faltering of the metal scene, when major labels were swooping up any band and having them squeeze out the most horrid shite. But Zody and crew had the look and the sound that was the start of crazed acid trippin' biker rock/metal. Unwashed and prophetic, they tore it up with "Prime Mover" and "Backseat Education". It was a big "fuck you" to all that hair band crap that was everywhere. I love this band.

23. ACCEPT - "Restless & Wild" (1983) The infamous Udo Dirkschneider belted out, with shrill ferocity, the metal anthems of a new generation. "Fast as a Shark" is probably the most "complete" metal toon around. To start a song off with the playing of an old Victorola spinning a German traditional ditty, only to scrape the needle right across it in mid-play, then shriek as loudly as anybody possibly could and rip right into a blazing metal riff. Udo and company are the metal Beethovens of their country. We metallians salute you!

22. ROUGE MALE - "First Visit" (1985) Elektra picked up these cyber-psychos in '85 when Metallica were really coming into their own and the label was delving into some of the Music For Nations bands, bringing them to the States. Unfortunately, their stay was short. The album (like so many like it) did nothing on the charts and was barely pushed by the label. It's hard and fast, and deserved a lot better than it got. They played at a nightclub in S.F. called the Kabuki, where some of the greats played, and they were incredible. You might be able to find it in a budget bin somewhere, but nowhere else. If you do find it, get it. NOW!

21. CORROSION OF CONFORMITY - "Blind" (1992) Crossover was a weird occurance in the eighties, with punk being edged out by metal, while every punk band was revered by the metal scene. So, a lot of punk bands did the crossover, to the delight of some (and the dismay of others). Sometimes, it really worked. In C.O.C.'s case, I definitely thought it worked. No matter what, if you're for or against crossover, it makes no diff to me. This album is C.O.C's finest moment as a metal band. If I was writing a punk article, then we'd be talking about a different album altogether. 'Nuff said.

20. SAXON - "The Eagle Has Landed" (1982) To look at these guys is to laugh. To hear these guys is to be impressed. Biff Byford is a living satire of himself, but I never saw Saxon put on a bad show. They supported Maiden on the "Piece of Mind" tour in '83, and came extremely close to blowing Maiden off the stage. Saxon was like Manowar without all the loincloths, but boy they could rip. This live show had all the best songs and the best production, and is a classic in every sense of the word.

19. ANTHRAX - "Among The Living" (1987) I believe that this was Anthrax's finest effort. "Spreading The Disease" is a close sec-

ond, but this one was a monster. Anthrax shared the respect of every metalhead in the Bay Area as the metal good guys. If it wasn't for Anthrax, Metallica would have died on the vine, literally. Always shredding and never swaying from their signature sound, they are the heart of metal. They were never appreciated to the degree they deserve, but they never gave up. This album proves their worth ten-fold.

18. DEF LEPPARD - "High N' Dry" (1981) For those of us who thought that it couldn't get any better than AC/DC, along came the new young riffs of Def Leppard. To say their name now, you might want to shade your face and mumble it quickly, but back in 1980-81, these guys were the new blood of mainstream hard rock/metal. "High N' Dry" still, to this day, is an incredible album. Now, I catch myself saying "better than AC/DC", and that is *clearly* wrong. No one is better than AC/DC, but Def Leppard, at the time, were a great addition those inspired by the sound that the Youngs & Co. had honed. "Let it Go" had that sound of a new day coming.

17. DIO - "Holy Diver" (1983) I bring this one up only for Dave Johnson's benefit. It is a very good album, and I will never remove it from my collection. Dio brought a new category into the metal scene, "Castle Rock". Also, Ronnie James is probably the nicest person in rock music today. And anyone that can say that they've sung for Rainbow AND Black Sabbath, give that man a fucking trophy! Beyond that, it's for metalheads who secretly like to play "Dungeons and Dragons" *[Uhh...Dude, it was* Heroes Unlimited, *get it straight. - Dave]* .

16. UFO - "Strangers In The Night" (1979) Older album, for sure, and a live one to boot. But this double record captured one of the greatest bands playing at their best. Every song is a metalhead staple, and Michael Schenker was at his peak with UFO. He left/got kicked out soon after. This band played so well together - and they wrote some incredible songs that still carry their weight today. UFO were the workhorses of metal back in the days before metal became a scene. They aren't the Godfathers of metal, but they're easily its favorite uncles.

15. JUDAS PRIEST - "Unleashed In The East" (1979) OK, you're probably wondering why the hell I'm recommending all these live albums. Well, let me tell you that I think most people miss the point when it comes to live albums. These recordings catch the best performances (most of the time), and a lot of time is spent mixing these tracks for maximum quality. "Unleashed" is Priest at their best, and these versions of their classic songs are done so well and with much more vigor than they could ever create in the confines of a stale studio. Judas Priest was a good album band, but a GREAT live band. Most of these bands excelled on stage rather than in the studio. Anyway, I'm getting off the track again. Listen to "Tyrant" off "Unleashed" and tell me that it isn't the best damn song they've done. "Dissident Aggressor" is my fave Priest track, but it ain't on this album.

14. RIOT - "Fire Down Under" (1981) New York had Anthrax and Anvil to represent metal in those days, but it also had a little-known band called Riot. Riot wasn't as heavy, so to speak, but they had a great guitarist and two great singers during their career. This album rips from beginning to end. "Swords and Tequila" was our drinking anthem when we would gather in parks and in basements to get ripped. Mark Reale and Rick Ventura's dual guitar attack was a force to be reckoned with, hands down. Yet another underrated band to fall by the "waste-side". And now, thanks to the



brilliant minds at Metal Blade, this opus has been reissued on CD and it sounds better than ever.

13. HOLOCAUST - "The Nightcomers" (1981) There's a certain crunch guitar riff that became the roots of this genre. It's what Metallica got their sound from in the beginning. Who came up with it and made use of it to perfection? Holocaust, pure and simple. Very simple, crunchy riffs and a very straightforward sound, but new and original at the time of the birth of that sound. They were pure in form. A great album in retrospect.

12. OZZY OSBOURNE - "Diary Of A Madman" (1981) Straight from the ashes of Sabbath rises Ozzy, as the veteran looking to resurrect his career by any means necessary. I firmly believe that Ozzy knew what was coming in the music world when they toured with Van Halen on the "Never Say Die" tour. Sabbath's last tour with Ozzy. VH came out every night, young and hungry, with that ferocious lightning speed guitar sound, while Sabbath would follow up lumbering, drunk, coked to the tits, and just burnt out. Ozzy and Tony were fighting like crazy, Ozzy knew it was the end, but he saw a light. He recruited Randy Rhoads, who would be labeled the most creative new metal guitarist around (and would be matched up againgst Eddie Van Halen in those *Circus* "Who is Better" features), plus a very solid drummer and bassist, and they came out swinging. They caught on like wildfire. The fans loved them. "Diary of a Madman" was their second album, and the band was tighter than ever. They'd acquired Tommy Aldridge on drums, and it all fit together perfectly. Randy was killed in a plane accident on that tour, which ended his short-but-unforgettable career, and in turn bestowed legendary status upon him. This album is the peak of his and Ozzy's band. It will never be matched.

11. VAN HALEN - "Fair Warning" (1981) This album was the mighty Halen's fourth effort, and to me it was the heaviest of all. "Fair Warning" didn't seem to have all the flash and glitz of the others, but it really got down to business with a fury. Even the cover depicted small vignettes of violence and pain. It was Halen on a street level, and it rounded out their catalog, offering a not-so-clean-and-shiny Halen. They could grapple in the dirt with the best of 'em. In David Lee Roth's book, he tells of the wear and tear of the tours that they would encounter, along with some of the pranks they would inflict on each other. This album seams to borrow from a lot of the darker sides of those times, and for some reason it just comes off as a much different sound. It grounded them for me, and is my favorite still.

10. THIN LIZZY - "Thunder And Lightning" (1983) Thin Lizzy was the band that spawned some of rock's best players. Brian Robertson, who would later join Motörhead for a brief time; Gary Moore, who went on to a brilliant solo career; and John Sykes, who found his way into Tygers Of Pan Tang before Lizzy and into Whitesnake soon after. Thin Lizzy was Irish rocker Phil Lynott's band, and they consistantly put out great songs that bands today still do covers of. "The Cowboy Song" is one of rock's favorite anthems from the "Jailbreak" album. "Thunder And Lightning" was their "metal" album. The whole album is heavy as hell, and it proved to be their last great record. They were an established band keeping up with the times, as well as showing their prowess to the young blood. The title track and "Cold Sweat" are just amazing songs. The whole album just rocks .

9. IRON MAIDEN - "Killers" (1981) Now we're getting into the nitty gritty. Iron Maiden was fairly new to the U.S. in 1981, and a friend of mine told me about this album "Killers". As soon as I heard the opening of "Drifter", I was hooked. I've seen them on every tour since then. They got bigger and better with every album. Bruce Dickinson is Maiden's best-known vocalist, and many will argue that he was the best, but I still feel that they were at their best musically when Paul DiAnno made his contributions. "Killers" was their last studio album with DiAnno, and it is *so* ripping. "Number of the Beast" was to follow, with Bruce new to the band, and granted, "Number" is an incredible work. But "Killers" kept the mood so much darker and whole.

8. VENOM - "Welcome To Hell" (1982) When kids started playing this at home, parents everywhere must've had a collective pants-shitting. It didn't get much more demonic than this back then. I mean, it really had us all convinced that we would be taking the express train right down to the fiery furnnace after hearing the screams of Cronos. None heavier, the undisputed kings of Black Metal came out and few knew what to do with them. Every once in a while, there comes a band which scares the living shit out of parents and makes them run to their therapists' couches to try and figure out how to handle it. Sinatra had 'em thinking that he had Satan's power over women, Elvis' pelvis was blocked from TV screens, and Venom brought it all to light. Sound over the top? It *was* at the time. "Welcome to Hell" couldn't have been more aptly titled. All Aboard!



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7. TYGRES OF PAN TANG - "Spellbound" John Sykes had a band of Brit rockers that had a few good albums, but kinda fell apart at the end with a loss of direction, mostly staying together out of desperation, or so it seemed. After Sykes left to join Lizzy, they definitely fell apart. But before they did, Tygers came out with "Spellbound". To me, it's a great album from start to finish. Heavy, catchy riffs, and each song works *so* well. It really fell into the Lizzy genre, which is probably why Sykes fit in so well with Phil and Co. It's not so hard to find either, so I recommend it.

6. BLACK SABBATH - "Sabbath Bloody Sabbath" (1974) The Sabs and Motörhead are my two most favorite bands. Neither can do any wrong. Every song is masterful, and I never skip tracks, *ever*. I had to pick only one Sabbath album, as hard as that task could ever be, but I did. I bought this album in '79 for two reasons. I saw an older kid wearing a Sabbath iron-on shirt with the "Sabbath Bloody Sabbath" cover in silver glitter, and it was only 50 cents in a budget bin on Telegraph Avenue. I was never the same afterward. It changed my life. As corny as that sounds, it really did. I listened to that album over and over again. It was my teenage angst album. I scoured the stores for every-Sab-thing prior to and current from that day on. I recommend EVERY Sabbath album; this one just happened to be the one that started me on my way.

5. EXODUS - "Bonded By Blood" (1985) Here are local metal heavies, Exodus, and their debut album. Metallica had "acquired" Kirk from Exodus a few years prior, but with Rick Hunolt filling in, they stayed just as heavy, if not heavier. Exodus was *our* band. Metallica was semi-LA 'cause that's where they started, and Slayer was *definitely* Orange County-based, so Exodus really *was* the Bay Area's premier metal band. Everyone here knew every word from this album before it came out, so it was more of a proud group moment for us all. Finally the world would know what we knew first. Exodus was so fucking great and so heavy; they were contenders for the whole scene to root for. "Bonded By Blood" encapsulates the Bay Area metal scene in the early to mid-eighties in every way. It catapulted them into big arenas and major festivals. They eventually fell apart, as all great things generally do, but for that first one, "Bonded" was it. And I ain't talking about no tuna fish!

4. MERCYFUL FATE - "Don't Break The Oath" (1984) Satanic to the core - but with a hint of humor - Mercyful Fate put a most capable group of musicians that played so amazingly well together with the charismatic haunted spectre frontman, King Diamond. His range was inhuman, and those who didn't like it HATED IT! But if you *did* like it, it was the shit. Even if you didn't care for the vocals, the music was so good that you would let them fade into it. They took what Venom was saying and elaborated on it, with entire pieces of music and orchestration (to a degree) that brought an eloquence to the genre.

3. METALLICA - "Kill 'Em All" (1983) I hate to give these guys any credit, but "Kill 'em All" was *definitely* a cornerstone in metal. Rough and fast, Metallica gave it to us good with thrash anthems like "Whiplash", "Four Horsemen", and "Metal Militia". It's the album that started it all for these guys. They were already getting huge recognition from the underground tape-trading community (encouraged by the band then, now a focus of litigation...makes ya think, huh?), and were being played all over Europe before they even had a record. It's a monster and will always be hailed as one of the classics.

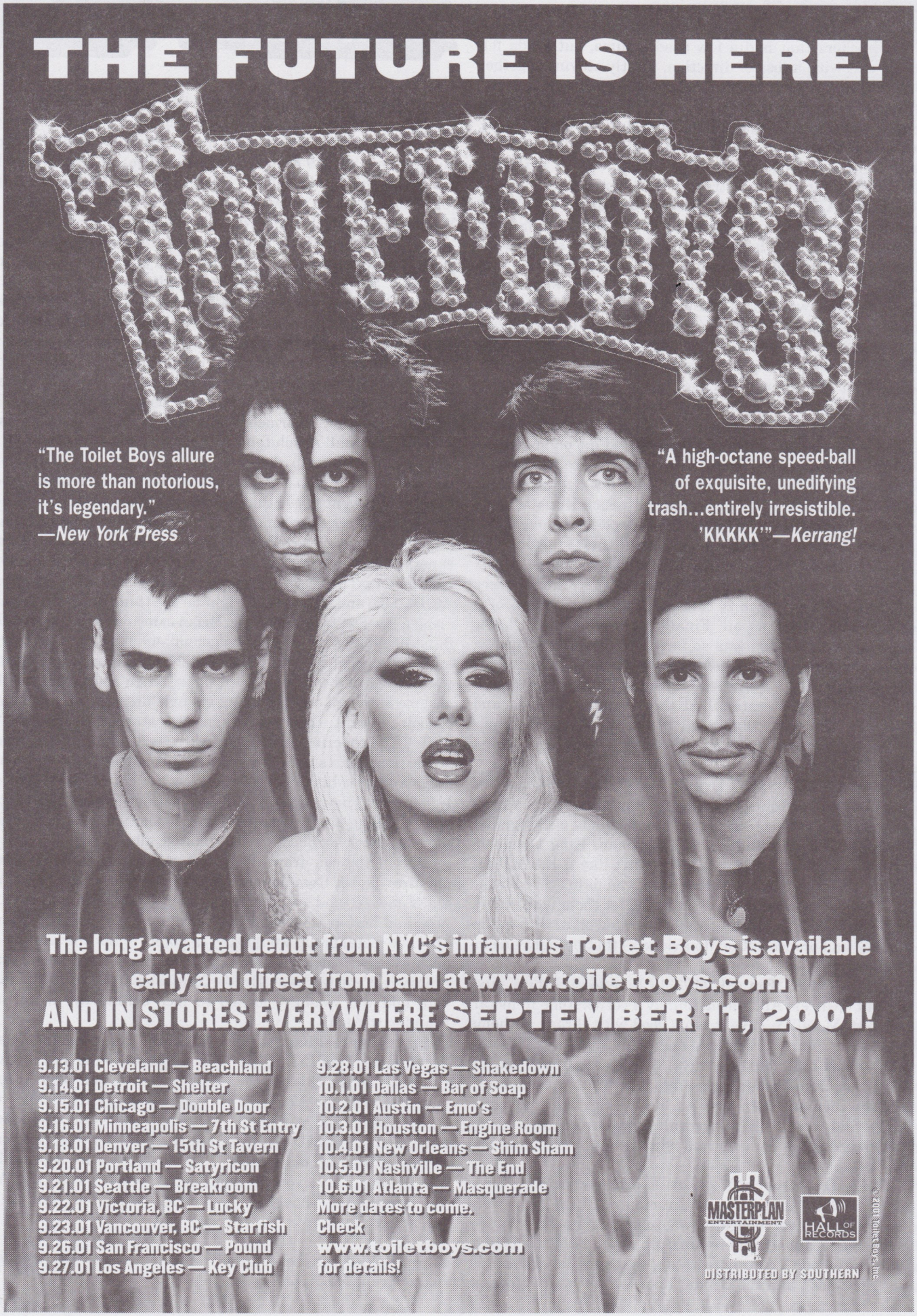
2. MOTÖRHEAD - "Overkill" (1979) Everybody in metal owes absolutely *everything* to Lemmy and company. These guys were tearing it up when everyone else was climbing up the drapes. Motörhead is like Sabbath; there ain't a bad apple in the bunch. "Overkill" was the one I cut my teeth on, so it's my fave. I bought the single "No Class", and the B-side "Like A Nightmare" blew me away. Instantaneous combustion! They became my favorite band right then and there. I bought "Overkill" soon after, and each track was overwhelming. I had never heard such power and volume in my life. This is *1979* that we're talking about. It was beyond belief that three guys could sound so *large*. And live? Forget about it. I've seen hundreds of shows, but very few come even *close* to a Motörhead show. Lemmy was once asked how it felt to be a "dinosaur" by some twat of a journalist. He replied with a sneer, "I might be a dinosaur, but I'm a fucking Tyrannosaurus Rex, motherfucker." Simply stated, Lemmy is God.

1. AC/DC - "Back In Black" (1980) Again, I'm going from personal experiences here, so bear with me. I bought "Highway to Hell" in '79 and I loved it. Played it on this little tape player at school, walking around town, skateboarding, everywhere. And when I got the news that Bon was dead, that crushed me. How could something that just caught my attention be over as soon as it started? Eight months later they reformed, and "Back In Black" was released. It was phenomenal! Absolutely the best comeback album of all time. They did it with such class - to pay tribute to their fallen singer, and to do it with such a quality album. It was momentous. I bought a ticket and went to see that tour at the Henry J. Kaiser (Oakland Auditorium back then) and it was - hands down - the BEST show I have ever seen. Ever. From start to finish, it was THE concert experience of my life. I was witness to one of the great moments in rock history. They slowly lowered this huge bell with the embossed AC/DC logo and "Hell's Bell" right on the thing down till it was hovering a few feet from the stage. Brian came out and the crowd went nuts! Wielding a ten-pound sledgehammer, he walked up to the bell and took a mighty swing. "DONG!!!!" The crowd went even more nuts! He hit it a couple of more times, when a spotlight hit the top of some Marshall cabs and, sure enough, dressed entirely in a black schoolboy outfit, there was Angus. He starts into intro to "Hell's Bells". The cheering from the crowd was deafening. Just when the whole band starts in on the song, Angus leaps off the cabs onto the stage and does his famous strut. Now the crowd is going absolutely ballistic. They played it all, and not one person left that show without being totally drained. When it comes to classic records, ask anyone, "Back In Black" is THE classic album.

Now, if you can draw all these bands' logos on the back of your old army jacket from memory, you move right to the bonus round. Quiet please, and no prompting from the studio audience. Easy now, and here it is. For all the marbles, which vocalist from what big-time metal group would stay in hotels under the nom-de-plume of "Lord Iffy Boatrace"? You have 30 seconds. BING! I'm sorry, but the correct answer was Bruce Dickinson from Iron Maiden. Too bad, and you would've looked so nice behind the wheel of that brand new Yugo.

I'm trying real hard to keep this thing goin', but I feel as if I'm losing some of you. Yeah, you. Quit flipping around and checkin' out the boobs on the chick in the ad five pages ahead. Well, at least let *me* get a look, too. You turn the pages too quickly. Screw you. Go buy a *Cosmo* and put me back in the rack. Well, this tears it. I tried, and if I failed you Brett, I'm truly sorry. What can you really expect from an old hesher? Fifteen minutes on booze, Maiden, and puking. There you go. Bon Apetit! (When I said "Bon Apetit", you immediately thought of Bon Scott, didn't you? Tell the truth. Aw, screw it!) ⊕

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INTERVIEWED BY GIZZ NAVARRO; TRANSCRIBED BY SAL COCHINO

THE REAL McKENZIES

THIS INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED AT GIZZ AND BRENNA NAVARRO'S HOUSE IN SUNLAND, CALIFORNIA FOLLOWING THE REAL MCKENZIES SHOW AT AL'S BAR IN DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES. FROM 4:30 A.M. TO 6:00 A.M., PAUL MCKENZIE (VOCALS), "DIRTY" KURT ROBERTSON (LEAD AND RHYTHM GUITAR/VOCALS), THE BONE (RHYTHM AND LEAD GUITAR/VOCALS), AND SAL COCHINO (*CENSOR THIS*/*RAZORCAKE* AND FORMER *FLIPSIDE* WRITER/REVIEWER), ALONG WITH GIZZ AND BRENNA (GIZZ'S WIFE) ALL SAT DOWN AND POLISHED OFF A BIG BOTTLE OF SCOTCH, FOUR CASES OF BUDWEISER, AND A TON OF CIGARETTES AND BONG HITS SO THAT THEY COULD DO THIS INTERVIEW…AT THE LAST MINUTE!…WHILE THE REST OF THE BAND'S MEMBERS LAY SCATTERED INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THEIR HOUSE. PICTURE THIS, AN RV PARKED ON THE LAWN. A DRUMMER PASSED OUT NEXT TO THE RV. A BAGPIPE PLAYER PASSED OUT BY THE FRONT DOOR. FRIENDS FROM GERMANY AND HOLLAND OUT TO SEE THE SHOW, PASSED OUT ON BUDWEISER AND SCOTCH IN THE MASTER BEDROOM. A HELL OF A NIGHT TO END A HELL OF A TOUR! HOPE YOU ENJOY READING AND GETTING TO KNOW THIS BRILLIANT BAND AS MUCH AS I HAVE ENJOYED KNOWING THEM OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. REMEMBER, THIS WAS DONE AFTER A SHOW AND TONS OF BOOZE. SCOTS WHA' HA'E!

PAUL McKENZIE (to "Dirty" Kurt): Here. Help me out with this!

DIRTY KURT (as he grabs the bottle and takes a swig): Sure. Sometimes I have to drink whiskey even when I don't want to just so that Paul [McKenzie] doesn't drink it all himself.

PAUL McKENZIE (very intoxicated and hard to understand…on tape): He's tryin' to protect me.

KURT (takes another drink): That is bad Whiskey!

PAUL (drinks a bit more): That sure was rich.

BONE (Paul trying to give Bone a drink): I don't want that!

PAUL: You don't?

BONE: No!

PAUL: Come on, have a sip!

BONE: No!

PAUL: You fuck! Come on!

BONE: No!

PAUL: Why are you telling me you can't?



BONE: Gizz, he's forcing alcohol on me!
PAUL: Look! You make me sick!
BONE: Then afterwards he's going to take advantage of me!
PAUL: No, that's not it. You have to have a drink with us.
KURT: Drink lots of whiskey and say dumb things.
BRENNA: That's what the kids want to hear!

GIZZ: They want to hear what The Bone has to say!

PAUL: Jesus!

GIZZ: Okay, go ahead and introduce yourselves to the lovely readers?

PAUL: Go ahead.
KURT: Bone is the fabric of the band.
BONE: I hold it all together.
PAUL: He is the one that weaves the weedler and the (sound it out) whaw, whaw, whaw!
ALL: (Stare at Paul wondering what the hell he just said)
BONE: Okay, Kurt. What about you?
PAUL: I don't know. You guys would have to answer that.
BONE: Kurt's my favorite cartoon character!
ALL: (Laughter)
KURT: Thanks, Boney.
PAUL: This is going nowhere, you guys. We really got to get it together! We're going to run out of tape!
BRENNA: That's okay! We've got more tape.
PAUL: All right! My name is Paul McKenzie. I play um...
KURT: Yourself?
PAUL: Oh yeah, I sing!
KURT: He plays himself in the Real McKenzies.
PAUL: I sing and I play myself in the Real McKenzies. Over to my left-hand side here we have "Dirty" Kurt Robertson on guitar, and behind me we have the illustrious and beautiful...
KURT: The Bone!
PAUL: The Bone. Mark Boneman.
BONE: Was sup.
PAUL: It's not like the T-Rex guy, it's a different guy but he's just as cool. Right, Bone?
KURT: Yeah!
BONE: Sure. Whatever.
KURT: And he has a place in his heart big enough for just about everyone.
PAUL: Excellent. Yes, he is benevolent individual. He takes after the Virgin Mary!



ALL: (Laughter)
PAUL: Anyway, what's the next question?

GIZZ: Well then, tell me about the new record?

KURT: Fuckin' excellent!
PAUL: It's a punk rock record!

GIZZ: What's it called?

KURT: It's called "Loch'd and Loaded".

GIZZ: And who's releasing it?

KURT: Ah, that's ah...
KURT/BONE: Honest Don's? [In stores September 2001]
PAUL: Are you going to write it down so that they both said Honest Don's at the same time?

GIZZ: Yes.

PAUL: Excellent! Oh, one thing I may want to...
KURT (to Bone): Jinx! You owe me a beer! HA!
PAUL: One thing I might want to interject here is that...

GIZZ: Actually, what you're saying right now will be printed in the interview too, so...

PAUL: Oh good! Good! Because...this record...I've made a lot of records and THIS record is the BEST record I've ever made in regards to and in terms of...its cohesive nature. And we had a good time! We had a fucking great time doing it, and I think it came through on the fucking record. And there was no horror show. No sniveling. No fucking horror show...You know what I'm talking about! You know, all that stuff that happens...
KURT: No whining and sniveling...
PAUL: (crying like a typical pansy-punk-rock-star) No, I'm the star and I wanna hear me! Wha!
KURT: (same type of crying) Can I do my track againnnnn...
PAUL: We went in, we kicked the shit out of each other and drank us up a storm and had a great fucking time. And in between we sang some songs.
KURT: We had Johnny Dunleavy at the helm, who also produced our first record at our little shit-hole studio.

GIZZ: Can you spell Johnny's last name for me really quick?

BONE: D-U-N-L-E-V-Y. (Which was incorrect, by the way, Bone)
PAUL (slurring): L-E-A-V-A-E-I-A-G-E-D-I. Blah, blah, blah!
ALL: (drunken laughter fills the room)
BONE: Are you serious?
PAUL: Oh, fuck yes!
BONE: He's Smashmouth's live sound guy.

GIZZ: Is he?

BONE: Yeah. He also did that Supersuckers country record.

GIZZ: Oh, wow! I did not know that! Interesting...

PAUL: Yeah, the old Supersuckers country



"EUROPE IS AWESOME! THE PEOPLE THERE LIKE THEIR PUNK ROCK OLD-STYLE, AND THEY WEAR IT ON THEIR SLEEVES."

record shite!
KURT: But he's most famous for the Real McKenzies first album!
PAUL: Yeah.

GIZZ: Where did you guys record? In Seattle or Vancouver?

BONE: Iron Wood Studios in Seattle.
KURT: And they were great people there too. They let us carry on like a bunch of maniacs and do our thing.
PAUL: We got to smoke and drink AND do the hoochie-coo. It was great!
KURT: And we boogie-woogied all night long.
PAUL: Yes! No!

GIZZ: So how much touring do you guys plan on doing for the new album?

KURT: We're going everywhere!
PAUL: It's going to be a fucking long, hard, arduous task, but...
KURT: We're coming to your town and we're gonna party down and we're a Canadian band!
BONE: And we're gonna crash on your couch again, Gizz!
PAUL/KURT: (Laugh) Yup!
KURT: I hope you don't mind?
PAUL: But what it takes is to fucking go! I mean, these guys [Fat Wreck Chords/Honest Don's] promised [us] for the first time in our lives that they'll have the posters in the stores and the records [on the shelves] and we can take care of the rest.
KURT: We've never actually had records on the shelves before, and we've been touring like idiots for ten years.
PAUL: I want to be on television and humiliate my peers.

GIZZ: Here's a question for you, since I'm a fan of the band and have toured with you guys in North America and Europe. Why is it so difficult to get your records here in the US and in Canada, whereas it's so easy to get them in Europe?

KURT: Because of *Plastic Bomb* [a German fanzine].
PAUL: And Social Bomb [the label of *Plastic Bomb*] out of Oberhausen, Germany. They've got their shit together.
KURT: We licensed "Clash of the Tartans" to them, or maybe Joey ["Shithead"/Keithley] did, and it's been selling like hotcakes over there.
PAUL: Joe has dropped the ball. And he's left us high and dry on the road many times.
KURT: Oh, come on now, let's not be...
PAUL: I want that in print!
KURT: We're no fucking...
PAUL: He's a cunt! He's a cheap cunt.
ALL: (rolling on the floor laughing hysterically)
KURT: We shouldn't be flinging shit up into Gizz's ceiling fan here, so let's change the subject!
PAUL: I know, I know. I just wanted to say that.
KURT: Okay! So, we changed record labels in case you haven't noticed! Ha, ha!!

GIZZ: So how did this last [North American/European] tour go?

KURT: Excellent! As you might've noticed we ran into you in Berlin [Germany] at the very start of this tour, and now we're here at your house two and a half months later – still on the same tour. Europe is awesome! The people there like their punk rock old-style, and they wear it on their sleeves.
PAUL: And their sandwiches are really good.
KURT: If you like meat and cheese, that's the place to go. And we didn't give a fuck about that hoof and mouth...fucking ass and mouth disease or whatever.
PAUL: Nope! They're full of shit!
KURT: I don't care. Have you heard anything on news about... you know... if you eat a hoof and mouth diseased cow, does that make you sick? No! I didn't hear anything about that. So fuck that, we ignored all the rumors and we ate lots of meat!
PAUL: That's right! In brief, Scotland went very well. They love us in Scotland...
KURT: And in England!
PAUL: Holland was extremely excellent.

GIZZ: How was the St. Pauli show [in Hamburg, Germany]?

KURT: We got to show our dirty Scottish/Canadian arses to 30,000 people.
PAUL: And 5 million more were watching at home on television!
BONE: There were 30,000 people, but only 50 were paying attention!
ALL: (laughing)
KURT: No!
PAUL: That doesn't matter! The people at home that were watching on television...
KURT: But when they saw our bums [asses] they paid attention. We have very sweaty tuchusses.
PAUL: There were 20 million people checking out our asses on TV at home, and that mades it all worthwhile. Right, Bone?
KURT: Actually, there was a woman at the bar tonight who commented that she'd remembered that I had a fine, hairy ass. So I showed my bum again tonight, and she said that I had lost hair off of my ass. Not only am I going bald, but I'm losing hair off my ass.
PAUL: Oh no, Kurt! That's shocking.
KURT: Here's to the loss of my ass hair!
PAUL/KURT: (both take a swill of whiskey)
PAUL: Oh fuck. Well, I personally cannot lament...
BONE: Hey, Gizz is this whole interview

going to be about ass hair.

GIZZ: Why not?

PAUL: I've never had a hairy bum, Kurt.
KURT: Well, that's the only thing that really annoys me about entering "Hairy Bum Competitions". And I'd win hands down everyday! It was great. I never won anything, but...
PAUL (transcribed to the best of my knowledge): Except for the illustrious Glenn Kruter having the fuzziest bum on the stage. Okay, next question please.
BONE: I don't believe there was a question there. You guys just volunteered all that information!
KURT: We just like talking about our butts, you know.

GIZZ: Okay, let's get to the band members. Tell me about your drummer, Brad.

KURT: Ha, ha! Brad Attitude, he is the motor of the McKenzies. Jesus, what do you say about Brad? He's a fuckin' maniac.

GIZZ: That he is!

KURT: His nickname is "Brad Attitude". Sometimes when you see Brad play, he appears to be very angry.
BONE: He's even angrier than he appears.
KURT: Perhaps he is angry when he plays, but once you've seen him play, you know...
PAUL: He actually almost needs that to get the motivation.
KURT: Yeah. He likes to hit things. He likes to hit things.

GIZZ: Tell me about your bassist, Jamie.

BONE: Jamie likes to get there first! And last and in between.
PAUL/KURT: (Laugh in agreement, with a long pause afterward...)
PAUL: Ah, yes he does. But Jamie is...this is interesting because [Jamie's] dad dated a girl that I dated when I was seventeen, and that was back in 1977. And I lied to her and told her that I was 25 even though I was 17 and she was 27. So it got back to me that Jamie's dad was dating my ex-girlfriend and so, of course, it's like Jamie might be my kid. Right? And the same thing is true with our bagpipe player, Matt.
KURT: It's funny because Paul was actually touring that part of Canada at the time of conception. So it could really be that Paul is Matt's dad too!
BONE: From time to time at our shows, Gizz, you can hear one of those guys asking for more dad in their monitor. Can I have more of my dad in my monitor?
PAUL: The reality of the truth is probably far, far different from what we're talking about here. We like to kid around. You know, on these long fucking drives and stuff, we like to take the piss out of each other while sitting around the table.
KURT: Back to Jamie or Jim, as we call him. He happens to be like the Odd Couple...
PAUL: (immediately begins to whistle the theme from the TV sitcom)
KURT: He's always riding our asses about having clean socks and brushing our teeth and stuff. And he plays bass really well, too. So, ah, he's a very integral part of the band.
BRENNA: Is he the youngest?
KURT: Jay? No! No, but he's not that old and he's not that young.
PAUL: He's 22 or something.
KURT: No, he wanted to be 21.
PAUL/KURT: He's 21.
KURT & PAUL: (argue about how old Jamie is)
BONE: Hey guys, *Hit List* don't want any bullshit in this magazine. Jamie is 37!
ALL: (burst out laughing)
KURT: No, he's not!
PAUL: He's not! Really?
BONE: He's actually turning 37.
KURT: He's going to kill you, Bone, when he reads this.
BONE: And he was responsible for me ripping the door off a limousine and he doesn't even realize it. The limo was in his name.
KURT: On the way to Europe, during the last trip.
BONE: Yeah, that's how we started the last European trip.
KURT: Because you ripped the door off the limo, you can tell the story from your point of view.
BONE: All right! The band comes to pick me up on the route to the airport.
PAUL: That's route! It's route! [Pronounced: root]
KURT (to Paul): Shut up!
BONE (to Paul): I got the bag here, shut up!
PAUL (to Bone): Don't say route, you fuck!
BONE (to Paul): I'm Canadian.
BONE: (to Kurt): Can you just gag this guy?
KURT: We took a limo because it was cheaper...





BONE (starting to get angry): You tell the fucking story!
PAUL: I'm sorry. We'll shut up.
BONE: No you won't! Okay, so...
ALL: (laughing at the drunken stupors)
PAUL (interrupting with a noise): Ah...
BONE: So...All right! Shut up!
PAUL (interrupts again): Ah...
BONE: So...Shut up!
PAUL (interrupting): La, la, la, la...
BONE (giggling): They go to pick me up at Main Street, which is en route to the airport, right? They took a limousine because it was cheaper than two cabs.
PAUL: Ah, I...
BONE: I thought you were going to shut up!
PAUL: I was, but...
ALL: (laughing hysterically again)
KURT (to Gizz): You gotta let people know we're joking!
BONE: I'm on the other side of the street thinking that they'll pick me up on the obvious side and that I won't have to wait. I'll just have to hop into the limo and we'll drive to the airport. But I see them in the turning lane so I run up to the window and Jamie's telling me to get in on the other side 'cause he's a lazy bastard and he doesn't want to move over! So I run around to the other side and I see the light changing, right? So now I'm panicking, I'm trying to shove all of my guitars and bags through the door, and in the meantime the fucking door hits this cement truck and the door leans up against the lug nuts on the wheel and I'm pushing my bag in and the fucking truck takes off and peals a big hunk of metal outta the side of this door.
KURT: The door didn't quite come off.
BONE: So I get into the limo and Chuckles is bitching away because the limo's in his name and the driver's gonna sue and this guy wants $500.
KURT: We just found that out, since we just got a call two days ago. He tracked us down and said he wanted $500 bucks. If anybody wants to pitch in for "Bone's Limo Door Fund", send your money to www.realmckenzies.com. Okay, soooo who's next?

GIZZ: Matt, tell me about Matt?

BONE: He's 30!
KURT: He's Jamie's pet project. He's working on Matt's hygiene.
BRENNA: He's right here, behind the couch.
PAUL: He's 30, married, with a child!
BONE: And his child is 20!
ALL: (laughter)
BONE: Don't ask.
KURT: Matt is the most incredible doodlesack player.
PAUL: A local hero.
BONE (to Gizz): Did you learn that over there? Doodlesack is Dutch for...
KURT: No, it's German or Deutsch.
BONE: ...for Bagpipe.
KURT: And he's known as a local hero in many towns.
PAUL: And he loves Deborah Harry.
BONE: He even told us he pictures her while he's doing it with his wife.
KURT: He named his kid Pierce because he had a pierced pecker at the time and the condom broke because of the piercing.
ALL: (uncomfortable silence)
KURT: And there you go! And now he has a kid because of that. He had a Prince Charlie or whatever they call it.
SAL COCHINO: A Prince Albert.

GIZZ: Now let's talk about my buddy, The Bone?

"WE WERE PISSED OFF BECAUSE THEY PROMISED US GOOD BACK-LINE GEAR AND THEY GAVE US CARVIN. AND I WAS CHOKED."

BONE: I can't answer that question. I think I'm a nice Canadian fella.

GIZZ: Tell me about Bone, Kurt?

KURT: With him [sitting right] here?

GIZZ: (laughs) Yeah!

KURT: I heard The Bone and I actually saw him playing in a band called Ted, who I like very much. I wanted his job and I went up to scrutinize him and thought "Wow, he's got good gear, a good sound – fuck, I can't take his job." So the next best thing was to hire him for our band.
BONE: Yeah, thanks Kurt.
KURT: Actually, there's this story about him getting paid $10 for being a roadie. It was his first time. He actually got hired as a roadie to start with for one night, but he quit. He thought we treated him shabbily because he didn't tune a guitar right and we only paid him half his allotted money. He's held it against us ever since. I don't know what the deal is. So now he eats a Whopper every day while we're on tour and flatulates in the van just to get back for that one roadie incident. And also he set it off by sitting down at the table with us while we were having dinner before a show. I said, "We normally don't sit with the help!" I was just joking, but he got up and was almost crying and then ran across the room.
BONE: I punched a wall.
KURT: And he's never forgiven us since then.
PAUL: But I want to say, he's an integral part of the band.
KURT: He is the fabric that holds this band together! Ha, ha!
PAUL: He's the fabric that holds this machine together.
BONE: I think I know Gizz better than I know you bastards!
PAUL: You probably do! Just 'cause you've toured with the [U.K.] Subs, you bastard...
KURT: Gizz, you can put in your own comments about Bone.
BONE: I've toured with Gizz a few times. He's a better drummer than all you guys.
PAUL: Put together.

GIZZ: Speaking of which, you've done some roadie work for other bands. Right, Bone?

BONE: Just for D.O.A. on the Social Chaos Tour in 1999. You know what's a good story? Remember that night we played in Providence, Rhode Island and they had those split stages? I had Joey from D.O.A.'s wallet in my pocket, with maybe a thousand bucks in it or whatever. And then I went over to help you guys and Nicky [Garratt of UK Subs] said, "Hey Bone, would you hold me wallet for a moment while I play this set?" And he had, I don't know, how much did he have in there, Gizz? I know you were flippin' through it.
KURT: Thousands?

GIZZ: I don't know? A lot, that's for sure.

BONE: That was pretty cool to have Nicky Garratt's and Joey Shithead's wallets in my pockets.
KURT: I would've kept 'em!
BONE (to Gizz): We could've got paid on that tour, and no one would've ever known it!

GIZZ: Paul, tell me about Kurt?

PAUL: I first saw Kurt in a band called Curious George. Not only did I fall in love with the band, but I fell in love with the fucking energy that this fucking man has on stage. And I said to myself, "self, I said, someday I shall play in a band with this man." Call it sixth sense, call it intuition, call it whatever you'd like but when the time came he took advantage of the opportunity and I'm in love with this fucking guy. I'm telling ya! We had to pull teeth for years together, but we fucking did it! The integrity, the willingness to party at the drop of a thimble...
BONE: That's disastrous.
PAUL: His spontaneity will be the fabric that holds this band together!
KURT: You're blithering fucking pissed, Paul! For Christ's sake!
PAUL: I'm talking from the heart now!
KURT: The people want to hear something interesting, not your heartfelt sentiment. I appreciate it, though.
ALL: (laughter)
PAUL: Okay, he can play good guitar too.
ALL: (room fills with laughter)
KURT: There ya go!

GIZZ: Okay Kurt. Your turn, tell me about the man called Paul McKenzie? When did you first meet Paul?

KURT: Um...Him and I were dating two girls that lived in the same house at the same time, and both these girls had very large drinking appetites, as did we. So we'd drink till 6 o'clock in the morning and wake up at 3 P.M. And for some reason we'd wake up and the two girls' rooms were adjacent, so I'd open the door and it was like being at The Flintstones: "Morning, Paul. Morning, Kurt. How are you?"
ALL: (laughing)
KURT: This went on for quite some time and I went down to a show, which was like the third McKenzies show, and I saw them play and they weren't very good at all. They were horrible! They ruined the club. They would put down their guitars and leap across tables and clear off drinks. So I came up to Paul at the end of the set and said, "I'm Robertson, and you need me in your band! You need something that sounds good there."
ALL:(rolling on the floor, laughing)
PAUL: And that was the beginning of the end.
KURT: And then he hires me and we go to the post-gig party and Paul tells the band, "Fellas, this is the guy I've wanted to work with for a long time." So Tony [Walker, the original guitarist for the McKenzies] says, "You over there! You're fired!" So I got hired and fired on the first night! But Paul kept on phoning, and I guess I replaced Tony when he was off doing another tour. I did that one show for them, and then Paul would phone me up and invite me every night down to where they were playing. But he didn't tell the other guys. So they thought that I was



insane, just some guy who walks in with his gear and fucking sits down and plays with the band! Ha, ha, ha!

GIZZ: When was this?

KURT: In 1992 or something.
PAUL: It worked out eventually, didn't it?
KURT: So Paul invited me into this crazy scenario. Paul's a big hero in Vancouver, since for many years he beat up all the fucking Nazis and dumb-asses and screwed everyone's wife.
PAUL: We're all nice guys!
KURT: But we weren't always nice, though. We used to fight after every show. Paul has grown into a good professional musician now. There was a time when Paul would get as drunk as he could and fight as many people as he could.
PAUL: Yeah, and I used to get laid back then too.
BONE: Since I came into your life, things have been better, huh?
KURT: You brought a little bit of sunshine into our lives, though.

GIZZ: Tell me about your childhood back in Scotland, Paul.

PAUL: I originally spent my childhood in Dublin, Ireland. My dad's from Glasgow, and my mum is from Intanash [spelling???]. They were working, so we stayed there. I stayed there until I was about 8-years-old, and then I moved to Canada because there were some jobs there. Eventually I moved across Canada to the west coast and settled in Vancouver. I was probably around 13 or 14 at that time. (Long pause)
KURT: And then came the punk rock. (Evil Laugh) HAHAHA!!! And then came the punk rock.
PAUL: Oh yeah! I must say that I've been intimately involved in the punk rock scene on the west coast and in Canada since I arrived. I got bit by the MC5.

GIZZ: What clan are you from?

PAUL: McKenzie.

GIZZ: Tell me a little about it?

PAUL: All the information is readily available online. I'm a bastard!
ALL: (giggling)
PAUL: And I like a drink and I like to take the piss out of the world.
KURT: I can't say that that's a regular McKenzie trait. But it is in Paul's book.
PAUL: I suppose...
KURT: I've met many polite McKenzies.
PAUL: We're all very polite. It's good.
BONE: He really dodged that question.

GIZZ: What made you guys decide to move to America?

KURT: We have an excellent, fine American record label.
PAUL: And we have a following here.
KURT: And we have you. We love to come visit you guys.
PAUL: It was really hard for us in Canada. Not only is it sparse, but to tour Canada you have to have a lot of gas money. For every 2000 miles you get 1...2...3...4...5...6...maybe 7 gigs. If you're lucky!
KURT: I recommend brownies, especially for the prairies.
PAUL: In terms of sheer numbers of punk rockers, it makes more sense for us to be here. And the only reason we've come to this realization is through trial and error. It's not like we just suddenly said we wanted to do it this way. We put our fucking miles in. And here we are. Ta-da! Actually, they pour the drinks fuckin' better here!
KURT: Well, they do! We really like the American free pour. If you get five drink tickets, you don't get American beer. You get five poured drinks. You can get a pretty good buzz off that!
PAUL: Yeah! Damn straight!
KURT: Tip the bartender.
PAUL: That's probably the main reason we're here.
KURT: We came for your booze...
PAUL: And your bars.

GIZZ: Has anyone ever been cited for indecent exposure?

PAUL: Shit...
KURT: Paul got chased around.
PAUL: But they never caught me.
KURT: They never caught him. They were chasing him down, but they arrested this very polite young man instead. Actually, he wasn't young and polite. Aaron Chapman, the rotten bastard!
BONE: Check this out...
KURT: So anyway, Aaron got arrested. This woman was screaming at the cops 'cause Paul was showing his...
BONE: Yarbles.
PAUL: We were pissed off because they promised us good backline gear and they gave us Carvin. And I was choked.
KURT: I was pretty embarrassed. So anyway, Paul exposed himself and after the show the cops came and grabbed Aaron.
PAUL: I would like to have a closing moment to dispel any negativity that is being passed along by members of the Real McKenzies. In regards to other bands and rivalries and whatever, I feel free and clear to state that I speak for the band when I say the more, the merrier. The more Celtic music, the more punk rock music that we can get, the better! And the more gigs we can do. The more we can drink. The more we can party. That's what it's all about. That's all I have to say. I love it! I love it! I'm addicted. That's my thing.
KURT/BONE: Thanks, Gizz!

SAN GERONIMO

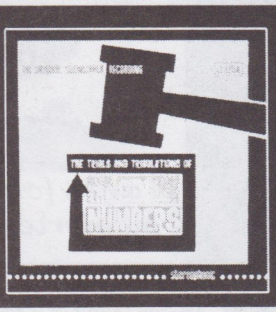
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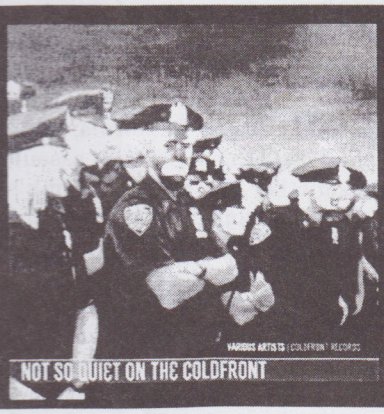


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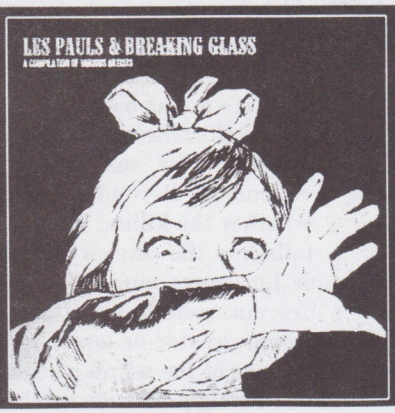


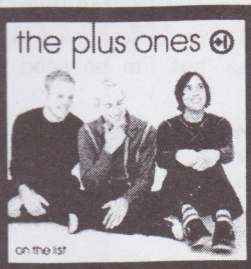
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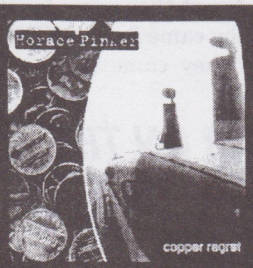
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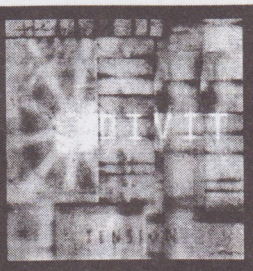
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HIT SQUAD

"I HATE HATE," OR WHY HATE CRIME LEGISLATION IS FUCKED...

Racism, homophobia, and sexism are pretty awful modes of thought that will hopefully be eradicated from the planet someday. But Hate Crime laws legislate what thoughts are not acceptable to be thinking while committing a violent crime-



Are we living in a Monty Python sketch or in the U.S. circa 2001?

Question: How is a brutal murder of someone at complete random less awful than a brutal murder of someone at *almost* complete random — except for the victim's skin color/sexual preference/gender? Or less awful than a brutal murder of someone that's a premeditated target? Or less awful than a premeditated target based on the target's skin color/sexual preference/gender?

Answer: It's not less awful, and in fact one could make a pretty strong case that a completely random murder is even more horrifying and brutal than a murder that's directed against a specific person or group of people.

Hate Crime Laws mean that the government is saying that it's not as bad to kill someone without saying anything as to kill someone while calling the victim an epithet based on skin color, sexual preference, or gender. To me, that's ridiculous. Beyond a certain point (which is finding out whether the killing was done in self-defense, and whether it falls into the category of manslaughter, 2nd degree murder, or 1st degree murder), there's no reason for the state to figure out motivation. The government shouldn't be able to assign greater or lesser penalties for assaults and murders because of the perp's political or cultural beliefs.

One big problem with the government legislating what are acceptable thoughts while committing violent crimes are overzealous prosecutors and District Attorneys. Here in San Francisc, a completely blotto drunk called another man a "faggot" and then assaulted the guy. Around the same time, an ex-Aryan Nations guy killed a number of people at a Jewish Community Center in Southern California. Both incidents are being prosecuted as hate crimes, but in the former case it's unclear whether the blind-drunk guy used "faggot" because he hated gays or because he grew up using it as a general put-down like many do/did in school/college. Obviously it's a fucked-up word, but it's not necessarily indicative of a attack motivated by homophobia. In the latter case, the perp stated he was out to kill Jews and his motivation for the killings was definitely linked to his political beliefs. Since it seems to be impossible to identify whether or not someone's motivation is based on bigotry unless the perp says so or has a long history of sieg-heiling, the use of such laws is automatically capricious and unevenly applied.

That said, there's plenty of reason for the press and the public to figure out motivation. Number one of those reasons is publicity and (hopefully) public condemnation of the killer's hateful motivations. An added bonus would be a frank public airing of local opinions and prejudices and how we as a society can progress beyond such Cro-Magnon thinking.

Also, adding more mandatory sentencing (which is the main punishment component of Hate Crime legislation) to the books when there're already *very* tough anti-murder laws in place (life in prison without parole, for instance), is not what we need as a society. Deterrence? As much of a deterrence as the death penalty, i.e., not a deterrent at all: if someone hates group X enough to assault or kill them, they will assault or kill them no matter what. The only change is that they may be deterred from uttering epithets while committing the crime. The end physical result to the victim is the same, although the mental result if the attacker remains silent during the attack may be puzzlement (as in "why me?").

In conversations elsewhere on this topic, I've been accused of not caring about victims of violent bigots. That's completely untrue. There are different strategies for combating bigotry. Hate Crime Law supporters want Big Brother to impose extra penalties on violent bigots because of the bigots belief systems. I believe that bigots should be called on their bullshit by society, and people who assault or murder people should go to prison. They are two separate issues.

The Future: Now that California officially has no "majority race," the following scenario is completely possible. A white businessman will charge a left-wing demonstrator with a hate crime after a demonstration during which the demonstrator smashes the businessman's BMW or assaults the businessman with his hands. And you know what? Legally he just may have a case, especially if the demonstrator's yelling something about rich white men ruling the world. Since whites are not a majority in California, they are therefore a minority, and the leftist can be charged with assaulting a racial minority based on, among other things, the victim's skin color. Implausible? Not at all. Our government has a long history of extending the reach of various laws to target specific political/social/racial groups.

[Actually, since the definition of racism involves a claim of one race's superiority over another race or races, minority status isn't necessary to claim racial bias — so Black Bloc beware across the States!]

All of us will rue the day that the left supported the passage of hate crimes. "First they came for the Nazis, but I hated those bastards, then they came for the KKK, but I never looked good in bedclothes, then they came for the militias, but I'm no good with firearms..."

UNCLEAR ON THE CONCEPT #1

I saw these two bumper stickers on the same car a couple of weeks ago:

"Keep Your Laws Off My Body"
"To Love a Kid is to Buckle Up a Kid"

Obviously the first one is a pro-choice bumper sticker, and the

second is a safety message. But how much do you want to bet the driver supports mandatory seat belt laws?

THE ZEN OF DRIVING

I drive for a living, picking up and dropping off disabled folks at their homes, stores, movie theaters, doctor's appointments, schools, you name it, all around the S.F. Bay Area. I love to drive, and by providing paratransit rides I'm able to indulge in a great pleasure of mine and get paid for it. There is a rhythm and pulse to rolling down streets and highways, figuring out the quickest and most efficient way from point A to point B. Gauging traffic conditions at every point and time of the day and remembering which roads have speed traps this week and which are under construction that week make a seemingly simple job engaging enough to provide mental job satisfaction. Plus, the paratransit system is providing direct service to segments of society whom desperately need it — I can see the difference my job makes in people's daily existence, and that's very satisfying.

There is a rhythm and pulse to rolling down streets and highways

It's a great job, except that I see a lot of bad drivers mixed in with the rest of us. I'm convinced that driver's education should be a major emphasis in high schools and that initial driver's tests should be really tough and based more on practical skill than DMV handbook trivia. But that's another column, probably better written by Dean over at the kick-ass *P.U.N.K.* (People Under No King) zine. I'll stick to a couple of basics before flitting on like the literary butterfly I am (flit, flit!).

18 wheelers are heavy. They can't stop or maneuver as well as a car or S.U.V., so don't cut in front of them.

S.U.V.s are trucks. They've a high center of gravity, that's why you can't drive them like a car and why they flip over at the drop of a hat.

Know the width of your vehicle. Drive as efficiently as possible. If you can safely squeeze through a space and keep traffic flowing, do it.

Turning lanes are for turning. Stop blocking traffic and get to the side to turn.

No one is entitled to block traffic. Sorry, this one gets me from calm to livid in 3.5 seconds: Drivers who try to cross a 2 way street and block one or both lanes in one direction while waiting for a break in traffic coming from the other direction.

Ambulances and Fire Trucks need to get through, pull over. Even if they're coming in the other direction they might



have to turn into that street to your right. Don't assume that they're just going straight. When you're the passenger in the back of a speeding ambulance, you'd want the rest of us to move out of the way, right?

UNCLEAR ON THE CONCEPT #2

At work I tune into NPR, Pacifica, CBC, BBC, whatever news/opinion shows I can find that are to the left of Rush and G. Gordon. Why then, do most of these outlets assume that every listener is from the salaried journalist/editor classes? My mostly lowest-income passengers and myself are constantly barraged with news items that assume that we always are buying plane tickets, buying and selling stocks and bonds, rebounding from our latest dot-com job loss, concerned about the latest gee-whiz internet gizmos, logging on-line from our speedy home computer, or choosing which of the for-profit health plans our employer provides for us.

The reality down here is that we are not salaried white-collar office workers with pension plans, health insurance, or 401Ks. We are surviving on service jobs, usually non-union and lacking benefits, unless we're on meager disability or welfare benefits. Soon a lot of us will be ineligible for such benefits under Clinton's Welfare Dismantling Act of 1996, and will be forced to fight with the illegals for bottom-of-the-barrel jobs as migrant pickers and dishwashers. I can't wait, and neither, I'm sure, can the prison-industrial complex. After all, if legal money-making ventures can't pay the bills, illegal ventures, usually much more lucrative, are only a desperate leap of logic away.

Like David Allen Coe sang, "I started out with nothing, and I still have much of it left."

VERSE, CHORUS, VERSE, CHORUS, BRIDGE, BREAKDOWN, "UNION" X 4, CHORUS X 2.

... there are no more Labor Sections or Labor Beats in your local daily newspaper. The Business Section is for the investor, owner, and middle management classes. Any labor action is documented as "unrest" that's bad for shareholder's profits and the economy. Massive job losses, known as layoffs before "down-sizing" started polluting the English language, are spun as "corrective measures to restore profitability" (for whom?) and "restructuring." Layoffs inflict massive damage upon us, the workers. They disrupt our income, destroy our careers, and throw us back into the uncertain job market of the current recession. After a massive layoff, our next paid words may be "Welcome to Greasy Pit Of Hell, may I take your order?"

Speaking of the service sector, it has expanded greatly during these boom times — an actual Labor Section could do some crazy stories about unions like SEIU and HEAR who are organizing low-income service workers across the country. Labor's been changing with the times, taking huge hits in manufacturing while organizing more white collar and service sector workers. The dot-com bust left all of those non-union dot-commers with no support, but if they had invested a tiny percentage of their obscene earnings into unionization, a lot of them wouldn't be eating ramen again.

Thanks to the Seattle protests, the Left's been reinvigorated by a reunion of the activist left with the labor left, although there are a ton of thorny issues to muddle through. Why isn't your paper of record covering this, except when there's another anti-globalization protest or when it affects shareholder's profits? How do we, as individuals, prod the media outlets we support daily to cover issues beyond the latest missing suburban kid or the new pandas down at the local zoo?

KICKIN' ASS...

... and takin' names this month include MANIC HISPANIC "The Recline of Mexican Civilization," T.REX "Electric Warrior," THE BRIEFS "Hit After Hit" (still), LARS FREDRICKSEN AND THE BASTARDS (still), ROSE TATTOO "Assault and Battery," THREE YEARS DOWN "Snake's Bite," NERVE AGENTS "The Butterfly Collection," EAST BAY CHASERS "s/t." It's been a pretty rocknroll kinda couple of months since the last issue, what can I say? Also, here's a couple of kick ass new 7"s for y'all- FOUR LETTER WORDS/PEE-LANDER Z (on GC Records outta SoCal) and THE TERESA BANKS PROFILES (on Corporate Records outta Houston). The former is crazed punk from both sides of the Pacific while the latter is more synthy but just as insane.

"A law for the rich, a law for the poor, I'm just a workin' man" — Rose Tattoo (whose populism is sometimes combined with silly xenophobic and illogical anti-union tendencies [see "Revenge" from their "Scarred For Life" LP])

Layoffs inflict massive damage upon us, the workers. They disrupt our income, destroy our careers, and throw us back into the uncertain job market of the current recession.

PRODUCT PLACEMENT

THE FRISK's "Rank Restraint" is out and in stores! It's out on Adeline Records and available through Sacto's newest indie distro, Mordam Records. "Rank Restraint" has 8 songs and is on 12" and CD. MP3s are available through Adeline's site at www.adelinerecords.net . Also check out our site at www.thefrisk.com for updates and all kinds of great lo-fi html web design: I spit on the dot-com world! Only wussies use things like Photoshop and FrontPage! Er, whatever.

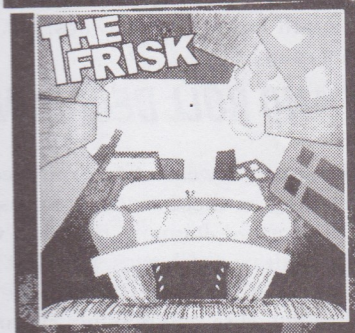
Also, the final CRIMINALS record, "Extinct" is out on 10" (finally!) and cdep and is available through F.O.A.D. Records, MP3s and ordering info is at www.dogdayrecords.com . What are you waiting for? I can't drive paratransit forever!

Insert cliched 'punk' sign-off here,
Jesse Luscious

ADELINE

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THE FRISK



RANK RESTRAINT

Comin Straight Outa The East Bay, The Frisk s debut release hits hella hard. With members of The Criminals and AFI would you expect anything else? 8 new songs out on 12"EP and CDEP

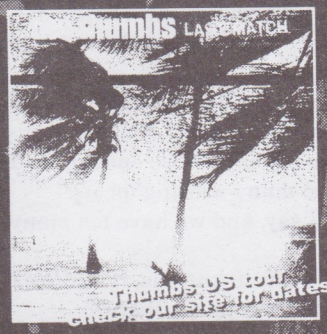
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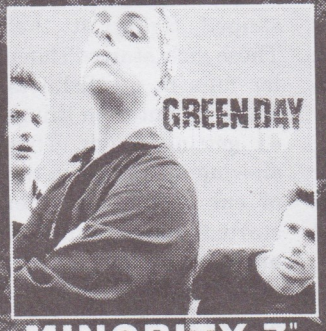
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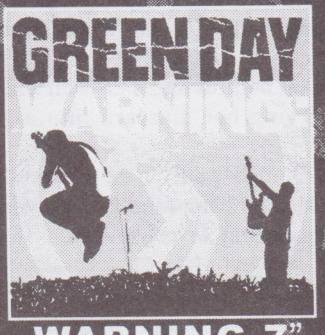
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"Now I get up around whenever, I used to get up on time."
-Guns N'Roses, "Mr. Brownstone"

7 PM, July 9th:

The lightning sizzles through the gray sky like a cat o' 9 tails, the thunder threatens to crack open the asphalt in front of us, and the blinding sheets of rain slam and rattle our beat-up Volvo. It's starting to seem like we're swimming to the show, not driving to it. Bob Maloney's behind the wheel. He's the bass player of the soon to be ultra-mega stoner-soul band, Quitter. Mark Thompson's riding shotgun, he's the bad-ass head honcho behind Tortuga Records, and Scissorfight's manager. I'm in the back with J Bennett, my editor at Boston's *Weekly Dig*, the newspaper I write for. Motley Crüe's "Shout at the Devil" blasts out of the heaving speakers.

"Dude, We're gonna end up with extra tickets." J's mulling things over. "This always happens. We're scrambling for tickets, wondering if we're gonna have enough, and then we get there and there's too many waiting for us."

"The third world is starving", I say, and we have too many free tickets for the Cult?"

"Whatever", Mark says. "All I want to know is, how drunk are we going to get? And will there be pussy there?"

10:30 PM:

Ian Astbury thanks Providence, Rhode Island for coming out. We are, of course, in Worcester, Massachusetts.

11:30 PM:

The street outside of the Palladium is littered with rock and roll burn-outs and retro-metal sluts in mini- skirts. I'm leaning on the House of Blues' police car, waiting for everybody, so I can get the fuck out of here. Theoretically, I'm supposed to be up at 5:30 for work, and we're still an hour out of Boston. Bob and J are shmoozing with some of the other Boston rockers that have made the ride up, but they're mostly punk-ass writers, so I'm not interested. I watch Mark wolf down a giant mustard-covered sausage, and then stick his tongue down some rock chick's throat a few minutes later. There's a whole drama going on behind me. A 25-year old suburban chick in spandex is crying her mascara into a gooey mess.

"Those fuckers threw me out of the VIP pen! Those fuckers!" Her two friends, both , like her, a little too overweight and over-the-rock'n'roll-hill to be groupies, are trying to console her. It's not working.

"I don't work at my dad's hardware store every day for ten dollars an hour to get thrown out on the fucking street like some nobody!" One of those jive-ass "street team" guys from WAAF comes up to them, trying to give them all stickers. "I don't want any fucking stickers," she yells. "I want to meet Monster Magnet!"
This whole little scene can't help but to make me think of Monster Magnet's ode to girls like this, "Bummer". "You're looking for the one who fucked your mom, it's not me", Dave Wyndorf explains. "I know life's a bummer, baby/That's got precious little to do with me." I wonder if she'll see the irony of it all the next time she plays that record. Probably not.

1:30 AM:

I finally get home. I'm so exhausted, I feel like crying. I keep thinking of that line from the Drunk Horse song, "Greasy Mustache"- "Been up for weeks, like a mad scientist, it ain't stopping cuz you want to rest." My fumbling with the keys wakes up Stacey. "Good show?," she asks me, squinting through the dark.
"Pretty cool, yeah." I say "Hey, you know what I'm thinking? I should get a job as an air courier. Then I'd be able to sit home and wait for the phone to ring. They'd call up and go, 'Ken, you want to go to Japan today? We've got some eyeballs on ice here,' and I'd go the fuck to Japan. That'd be cool, right?"
"Are you trying to get out of going to work tomorrow?," Stacey asks me. I think I probably am.
I wake up at noon the next day, eat a bowl of cereal, and turn on some Fu Manchu. I'm five and a half hours late for work, but I've never felt more right on schedule in my life.

THE PERILS OF ROCK AND ROLL DECADENCE

"There was one show where we were showcasing for some record people. Some idiot at the bar was flinging those cardboard coasters at us. He was really good at it, he winged Jenna in the head with them a couple times. Our rhythm guitarist, Charles, goes out into the crowd, and while he's still playing, bitch-slaps the guy. The guy jumps him, and they're rolling around. He's still playing. He comes back onstage and finishes the song. He's got the guy's hair in his tuning pegs."

Spyder, Detox Darlings
(http://hometown.aol.com/detox2001/)



"You don't expect a lot out of Indianapolis usually, I mean the rock and roll scene is pretty lame over there. But last time we played there, we walked into a pretty rowdy crowd. I wear fishnets sometimes, I think Tommy was wearing striped tights at the time. These girls started shoving dollar bills in my fishnets. That was cool, but then things started getting rough. They were shoving money down the backs of our tights, and then they started pulling our tights off and tried shoving money up our asses. One girl tore off Tommy's pants and tried sticking her fingers in his ass; he just narrowly escaped that. They were ripping off our clothes. I had a dress on at the time, and she pulled it over my head, then kicked me square in the back." This is usually the time when saner heads prevail, and someone calls the cops. There were no sane heads in Indianapolis that night. "Then she started spanking me, basically with a closed fist. I had bruised thighs the next day. By this time, people were heckling us, so I started throwing bottles on stage. Then people started throwing bottles and wine

glasses at us. There were a couple of tables set up, and people started climbing all over them, falling off and onto the floor. It was a pretty violent little episode we had going on there."

-Ginchy, Swampass
(www.swampass.net)



"Youngstown is the armpit of Ohio. Broken homes line the streets, porn stores remain the city's only thriving industry, and murder reigns supreme. Nevertheless, for Hellvis, it's the perfect setting. Recently we played a show in Youngstown at a club called the Nyabinghi. With the neon Pabst Blue Ribbon sign, the overflowing urinal, and the moosehead on the wall, this bar has rock and roll written all over it. Seeing as how Youngstown is my home town, we tend to go as over the top as we can for our stage show when we roll through. There was a great turnout and the whole vibe, as one friend put, was, "We all know something's gonna go down , but we just don't know what."

We saved all the drama for the set's finale, as we had a scantily clad fire eater throw balls of flame and then douse them in her mouth. I prefer strapping explosives to my bass guitar, which I did at the beginning of the following song, sending out a five foot high flame that nearly torched our guitarist and a few photographers. Not wanting to be outdone our drummer shot off an 1841 Indian gun at the end of our closing song that shattered the tubes in our guitarist's amp head and caused some severe whiplash in a few patrons sitting at the bar. We don't typically tell bar owners what we're going to do when we bring our white trash pyro to the show, but luckily The Nyabinghi's policy is, 'If it rocks, and you don't break the state of the art PA system, it's cool.'Besides, *USA Today* voted Youngstown the murder city capital of the country. I'm sure our pyro is the least of this broken down town's worries.

-BJ, Hellvis
(www.hellvis.com)

On the Bloodhound Gang Boobies tour we did two gigs in a row at The Electric Factory in Philadelphia. This was during the "Bad Touch" reign on MTV's TRL, and both shows were packed. Our boys in BHG had a running gag where they'd challenge some idiot in the crowd to drink a warm 12-pack of Dr.Pepper without spilling, pissing, or puking on the stage. The prize was 100 bucks and nobody ever pulled it off. Since some of the two thousand in attendance had seen this the night before, we figured this was the best time to rib theBHGang. As we paused before our last song, I wiped the blood and beer from my eyes (my mic stand was wrapped in barbwire for the tour) so I could address the crowd. Unlike most of places on the tour we actually had fans in Pennsylvania, and the crowd was hoss. "Which one of you assholes wants twenty bucks and a T-shirt?," I asked the crowd. For starters, we weren't about to give away 100 bucks, and by the positive roar of the crowd, they must have thought it was gonna be a Bloodhound shirt, not one of ours. "Allright, here's the rules," I continued, " You've got to make out with our roadie, Billy." I could tell the young chicks were drunk and willing by the high squeals and the gay-ass friendship bracelets (or whatever the fuck they call those things) waving in the air. We'll hook one of you up under these conditions: Number one. You must kiss Billy on the mouth until this next song is over." They screamed louder. I could see Billy smiling over on the side of the stage. "Number two: You must not spit, piss, or throw up on our precious Billy." Even louder. These girls were loose. "And number three: You must be a guy." The next roar only came after a brief silence ending with a drunken fan doing his best to climb the 5-foot high barricades to make his way to the unusually even-higher stage. He stumbled around behind me pumping his hands in the air in a way usually reserved only for a Foghat cover-band's encore. As he grabbed a beer and began to throw it down, "Billy The Gay Roadie" skipped onto the stage smiling, and I asked what the crowd was surely thinking," "Dude, do you know why you're up here?" Still pumping his hands and spitting beer he screamed, "No!" And with that he let out a "Whooohooo!" (That must be the Northern equivalent of our beloved Yeeehaaaw!) "You've gotta make out with Billy or get the fuck off the stage." At that very moment, the band kicked into "Talk Dirty To Me, " the fan paused, and began to make out with our flaming crew member. After a moment of hesitation, the guy pulled back. Billy grabbed him and shoved his tongue in his mouth. So there we were, covered in blood and spewed beer. Playing a shitty Poison cover song, as two grown men rubbed their tongues together (and I assume that at least one of them got a boner). At this point a very homophobic Evil Jared ran onto the stage and ripped the two dudes apart from one another in a way that would have made Jesse Helms proud. Jared stared at the drunken sportsman, shaking him, and yelled ,"What the fuck are you doing?!" I could see it in his eyes. I'm not really sure what "it" was, but I'm sure it had to do with Jack Daniels and some sort of pills that he wasn't fucking sharing with us. Whatever it was, as he realised that he'd just made out with a guy in front of a couple thousand TRL fans, he turned and ran toward the crowd. I've got no idea why, but the guy paused right before he got to the edge of the stage, then jumped, sort of. Both of his shins hit the barricade with full force and spun him over twice clearing about 12 people in the front rows. I saw the guy later that night (The club's security informed me his old lady was pissed at him and was going to leave him. I went out to smooth things over) and he had knots poking out both of his shins the size of softballs. Refusing medical assistance. No shit. Bloodhound Gang forwarded us letters and emails for months with threats of lawsuits, complaints about us, demands for free shit, and the like. Then they toured the UK and stole the gimmick.

-Chris Sutton, Isabelle's Gift



"When you're not from Vegas and "open bar" is part of your pay, you may as well start thinking about what you want written on your tombstone. After a few hours of double bourbons in a Las Vegas strip-mall, our roadie decides to sharpen the high-hat stand with our drummers rib cage. Three more guys jump in, including the bartender who does this unforgettable Olympic leap over the bar. When it was all over, they started handing out double bourbons again. If you can drink in Vegas...you can drink for real. "

-Sabrina Rock Arena, Cookie

"Our worst show was when our trumpet player, Vinnie Valentine, was shot in the stomach, over some girlfriend episode. This chick, Julie something, I don't remember, shot him while we were on stage. The only reason that it was bad was because we had to stop the show. There's bands like the Beatles, let's say, with their 'Dr.Pepper', which was a monumental record for them, right? Well, that's what I want to do on stage every night, the whole cream

show. And with somebody getting shot on stage, I can't achieve that. I had cd 1 done. Where's cd 2? You open up the case and it's missing. People are yelling at you, going, "Where's the party, where's the party?" and I'm giving them paramedics..."

-Harlem Greenwood, Coke Dealer

THE DAY I PUNCHED THE ANTI-CHRIST IN THE FACE

It was 1993, and I was a low-budget media terrorist halfway to gone on whiskey and pills. The venerable Dimitri Monroe had just escaped from a psychopathic glam rock chick, and an angry Boston mob, to Ohio. For more information on how well that little life decision worked out, just read his column. Dimitri was the host of my TV show, "Welcome To Weird City", a weekly foray into the gutter of fringe culture, the palace of the big freak-out, where splatter heroes, amateur porn skanks, dangerous conspiracy burn-outs, drug bingeing outlaw bikers, and lower echelon rock stars converged to drink, fight, and prove some vague point about justice, freedom, and rock and roll. That was the idea, anyway. Mostly it was broken equipment, surly, hung-over guests, suspensions and disclaimers, shameful behavior, and regret in sound and color. Without the "show -up and blow-up" alley cat charm of Dimitri...well, we were already fucked, now just a little more so. We briefly flirted with the idea of replacing him with Chaz Halo, and hoping that nobody would notice. Chaz isn't the kind of cat that can hang with getting blood in his well-gelled hair, however. We finally decided on an alcoholic homeless puppet named "Mr. No Legs", and a mildly retarded headbanger from the south shore of Massachusetts named Krakus. It was actually a lot better on tape than it reads.

Marilyn Manson and his Spooky Kids were blowing through town on their first national tour in support of that horrible first record of theirs, and we thought, given the freak-show nature of their scene, that a little "Weird City" interface would liven things up considerably. Promotions people are such whores that they'll agree to anything if they think it'll sell more tickets, so they scheduled us, along with a slew of real Boston media, to interview the band at a hotel conference room downtown, the morning of their show at the Middle East club. This cat I knew, Henry, was our puppeteer. He was a professional improv comic. As professional as a job like that gets, anyway. So he was away on some gig, and my smoke-dulled, liquor-fueled, Armenian Rasta roommate John decided he could commandeer Mr. No Legs, no sweat. "He's a puppet that says "fuck" and coughs a lot, how hard is that?" This was mistake number one. Mistake number two was dragging an agitated Krakus along. He had the good taste to hate Marilyn Manson from the moment he saw the press photo. " I don't like these guys, they look like a bunch of fuckin' queers," he told me between sips of Miller-in-the-can, "And I ain't talking to no queers." I told him that he only had to ask them about manly things, like chicks and Motley Crüe, so he reluctantly agreed.

Luckily, I was too hung-over that morning to make the interview, so my co-producer, Hollywood Rich, shot the interview. "The place was packed with all these newspaper guys and record label chicks," he reported to me. "They told us we were only allowed three questions each. We had to line up like fucking circus animals. Marilyn Manson and his guitar player, Twiggy, were sitting there at a card table, looking bored and pissed off. One by one, the 'reporters' went up to the table and asked shit about influences and censorship, or whatever. Marilyn would answer the question like he was smarter than everybody in the room, and Twiggy would only give one-word answers. It was pretty boring and lame, really.

It didn't stay that way for long. Finally, "Weird City" got its chance to take on the corporate rock machine. "John froze, man, it was a riot. He's standing there with this puppet, y'know, this white, dreadlocked guy in thick glasses with a fucking muppet covering his arm, fumbling with some notes, going, 'So, is "Cake and Sodomy" a political statement?' with Mr. No legs' mouth opening and shutting, totally out of synch. These Manson fuckers aren't even responding, they think it's some kind of joke. The publicity guy goes, 'Ok, next,' totally dismissing us, right? And then Krakus steps up to the plate and goes, 'So, you guys like to go 4-wheeling?' Everybody in the room cracks up except for the rock stars and their little bodyguard there, who's pissed. Krakus keeps going. 'Cuz I like 4-wheeling, especially on gravel. I get my brother's truck and go down to the quarry. I'm doing fucking spin-outs, I'm blasting the tunes, like maybe some Halen...you queers like Van Halen?' Twiggy overturns the table and storms off. The press guy starts yelling that the interviews are over until we leave. I'd say it was a successful mission."

That night, Marilyn Mason was playing a sold-out show downstairs at the Mid East, and I showed up with a hi-8 camera to shoot the proceedings. Hot chick industrial pop band Zia and fat, sorry-assed industrial metal band Monster Voodoo Machine opened up. I hung out on the side of the stage, swilling Jack Daniels from a flask and taping the bands. The room slowly filled to capacity, like 600 kids, half of whom were wearing Manson's "Satanic Army" t-shirts like some junior suicide cult. The road crew peppered the stage with oversized, pseudo-goth nursery room props. Krakus was starting to make some sense. Some Manson security thug comes up to me and says, "Put the camera away. No filming tonight." What? "First of all, you guys started trouble this morning, so you're lucky we even let you in. Nobody's allowed to film on this tour, anyway." "Fuck all that," I say, " I need to get some footage." "We're going to put out an official live video," he says, trying to reason with me, "we'll send you one." "Listen, man, I'm taping the fucking show." "If I see you shooting the band," he warns me, "I'm going to break your camera." By this time, the Mid East's security staff has shown up. "You ought to leave", one of them tells me. "You're kind of drunk." Well, that was true. I was also pissed beyond repair. I stormed up the ramp and out the back door into the parking lot. Standing in front of their bus, smoking weed, was Marilyn and his pretty ugly boys. Good. I was looking for a fight.

"Hey!," I yell in their general direction. "What's this shit about cameras?" I started lurching towards the band. "This ain't fucking Florida!," I remember saying, whatever the fuck that meant. They were just staring at me, really, so I decided I would film that. I needed to get some kind of story out of this bullshit. As I fumbled with my camera, somebody came up and punched me in the back, and then shoved me. It was the Manson tour guy again. What else was I going to do? I started swinging. Marilyn Manson was closest to me, so he was lucky enough to eat the first Sleazegrinder knuckle sandwich. The last one, too, it turns out, as I got tackled from behind. I was pretty much done by then, anyway.

I stumbled home with a broken camera and a bruised back. John refused to let us run the interview footage, citing some mystical legality. Then he threw me out of our apartment. Krakus accidentally destroyed Mr. No Legs on air a few days later, while rocking a bit too fiercely to Antiseen's cover of BTO's "Taking Care of Business", so we were out of a host again. Thankfully, the TV station cancelled our contract soon after, for obvious reasons, ending a two-year spree of tele-

vised mayhem that would have killed me if it had dragged on any longer. Hollywood Rich took off , fittingly enough, for Hollywood, where he got a job as a cameraman for "Baywatch Nights". I slunk off to rehab. So much for keeping TV evil.

I thought there might be a moral to this story, but there really isn't. "Don't go to Ohio," maybe, but you already knew that. Oh, well. "Kicks is kicks," as Rich used to say. By the way, to Phony Rock and Roll, Inc., I want to apologize in advance, and retract all of my above statements, even if they are true. Your band still sucks, though. I can't do shit about that.

HEMI FUCKING CUDA



Imagine the Barbie Twins, only with pink hair, tattoos, and crusted blood and skin underneath their fingernails. Now imagine that this heady con-glam-oration is the nucleus of a searing Motorpunk band that's named after a bad-ass hotrod. Now imagine they're headed to your town, looking for cheap thrills and rock'n'roll damnation. Ladies and gentleman, I present to you Denver's reigning queens of noise, Hemicuda. They are a gasoline and estrogen cocktail, shooting out of the starting post like a triple speed, even-more-coked-out-than usual Roadsaw. Hemicuda lay down the piston-punk with howling fury, running on a full tank of pop hooks and sleazy thrills, before slamming into the finish line with the sonic tiger purr of a satisified slant 6 engine tooling for a post-coital smoke. Calling them "Action rock" might smack of heavy-handed innuendo, but if their latest record, "Classics For Lovers" is any indication, then wherever these chicks are is where it's at, if you know what I'm saying. And I think you do.

I called Karen Exley, the Cuda's bass player and sometimes vocalist, from the Wonderland dog track, for a dose of speed-rock gospel. As my millions burned, thanks to panicked greyhounds tripping over each other and stopping mid-race to lick their nuts, Karen laid the Hemicuda story on me. "It just kind of happened. I was in this band called Self-Service at the time, and Anika (Zappe - guitar and vocals) had a band called the Hectics that broke up. So, her and the other girl that was in the Hectics had a new band together, but they never had a bass player, and I would see them around town and give them shit about not having a bass player in the band. Eventually, they hunted me down, and we started rocking." Karen's obviously in a rush to get to something cooler, a little devil-speak, a little trash-talk maybe, but she's dutifully tracing the lineage anyway. "And then Julie, the other girl, she quit after like the first or second show." I ask her what happened to Julie. "She wanted to stay home, be domestic, and plant flowers," she laughs. "Which is OK, we're a lot better musically without her." I note that Hemicuda decided to forge ahead with a boy on the battery, dissolving the she-rock factor. "There's not any girls in town that can actually rock", Karen tells me. We've gone through four different drummers so far. We're on a quest this summer to find a permanent drummer. It's kind of a pain, you know. We want to play all these shows, and we have to find another drummer for every gig and teach them all the songs." I ask her why Hemicuda have such a problem finding drummers. A question just about every rock band in the world is trying desperately to find an answer to. "It's just hard to find somebody with the level of commitment we want," she says. "A lot of people in Denver are happy with their little comfort zone, and don't want to leave." She tells the tale of the last Hemi-casualty. "We found this one kid that really wanted to play with us. He was going to school for drums, he had tattoos, the whole look. We wanted somebody young and ambitious, so we were psyched. Then, the first day of practice he bailed out. He said he had to get a job for the summer," she says, sounding disgusted. Obviously, the hip young cat got a little too close to the rock'n'roll flame, and he got burnt. "Exactly. You know, school, corporate jobs, that stuff is going to be there forever. You should rock while you still have the chance." Right on, sister. "So that's the problem with the drummers, it's not that we're a couple of bitches. Plus, the view back there is pretty good," she laughs.

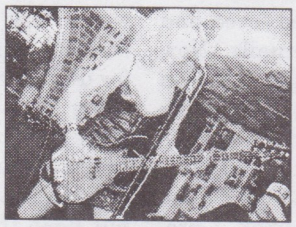
When I first heard the name 'Hemicuda', I thought maybe they were chicas or something. I ask Karen what the fuck a Hemicuda is, and how she chose it for a band name. "Julie booked some shows for us, so we had to come up with a name." You know, this is something I've noticed in my many days in the rock and roll trenches. Guys figure out the name, look, and theme of their bands before they even learn to play their instruments. Girls wait until the last minute, figuring it'll all fall into place. "We all had some cool ideas, but none that all of us were digging," Karen says. " And then I thought about how when I was little, my step-dad was a total gearhead. He had a ton of hot rods, and he had a Hemi 'Cuda. Little kids in elementary school can be pretty ruthless, so they used to make fun of me a lot, and it wasn't until later in life that I realized how fucking cool it was that I got dropped off at school in a purple Hemi 'Cuda everyday. That car is one of the most bad-ass street cars ever made. So we were like 'Yeh! Hemi 'Cuda'" Another legend born out of revenge for playground cruelty. I ask her if they actually own a Hemi 'Cuda. She laughs at me. "Those cars have a blue book value of like a hundred thousand dollars." I tell her she ought to put the car down as part of their first big record contract. "Fuck yeah, a pink Hemi 'Cuda. We could make it from Vancouver to San Diego in 4 hours!"

We get to talking about Hemicuda's slut-chic look. "Our shtick, with the matching wigs and stuff, came together over the past couple of years," Karen says, talking about the sexy-crazy-cool image. "We always tried to co-ordinate the stuff we wore on stage, but after we started with the wigs, things got more over-the top." I ask her how the image plays with the great unwashed. "There's some people in Denver that hate the shtick, you know, but it's not like we don't rock. It'd be different if we sucked, if we couldn't play and we just relied on our looks." Hemicuda could get by being dog-faced drivers, given the ferocity of their rock and roll mayhem, but pretty pictures still make for a better story. "Totally. We see the value of all aspects of performance. You go to see any band in town, and all the guys, they're wearing exactly what they were walking around in all day. Not that that's a big deal or anything, but that's one of the things that separates going to a show from just listening to a CD - incorporating all the senses. That's why we always smell so bad," she jokes.

"Classics For Lovers", the new album, bursts out of its cage like a tiger, the "Hemicuda Theme" opening the proceedings with a ripsaw buzz-punk riff and a full-throated roar of "Hemi-fucking-cuda!", like the revolution has hit the streets. Songs like "Do What I Please" and "Betting Man" follow a similar greased path of speed and raunch. A couple of tracks, however, in comparison to the rest of the record, sound...well, a little girly. "Well, we're girls, what the fuck do you expect?," Karen counters, with a laugh. "We had a few songs that, for awhile, we wouldn't play because we didn't think they were tough enough, but fuck it, ya know? They're good songs, so why not play them?" Fair enough, but "Karen's Theme", with it's wistful "Oh, did you know you're the only one, the only one..." is a

far cry from the theme song's "Got my bitch up front and my nitrous in the trunk". "Actually, the title of that song is to distract you from the fact that it's really Anika's theme. She had a broken heart, and broken hearts are always good material for songs." Anika didn't want to cop to such frailties, but Karen didn't care. Everybody already knows that she's as hard as nails. "It kind of summed up my attitude anyway," she says.

I ask her about the Hemicuda sound, and what flavor of the rock inspires them. "Anika likes a lot of garage stuff, real basic, stripped down 3-chord rock," she says. "I listen to a lot of metal and a lot of hardcore, but the music I write is usually never like what I listen to." Metal? After talking with Karen for a half an hour, I find scant evidence of headbanger chick-ness. She hasn't even called me "dude" once. "I like Pantera, Slayer, stuff like that." Thankfully, there's no thrash metal shredding going on in the grooves of "Classics", but Roadsaw's trademark motor-stoner tones slip and slide throughout the proceedings. Speed-stoner rock? "Anika plays in another band that's total stoner rock," Karen admits. "They're called the Super Bees. They're kind of a Fu Manchu, Queens of the Stone Age kind of thing. But that's Anika's thing, I don't want to talk about them too much, this is about Hemicuda." Something tells me that Karen's not down with the stoner rock brotherhood. "Aww, I like some of it, but most of that stuff is just bandwagon rock. You know, like someone does something that's cool, and everyone just kind of jumps on the bandwagon, and starts doing it too. It's just not very original music. Not that what we do is all that original either," she laughs.



OK, so Hemicuda didn't invent hot chicks with guitars, but they have made good use of a winning formula. Here's another point where girl bands and guy bands differ. Guys develop a sound, and then they're done. Who needs songs, baby? We got a killer tone. Case in point, every European stoner rock band. Girls, however, go through the trouble of actually writing melodies, harmonies, hooks. "Oh yeah, we're hookers," Karen jokes. I wonder if Karen sees any 'Cuda hits in the future. "Yes. I'm confident in saying that. I mean, we get a lot of college airplay. We probably wouldn't get signed to a major label or anything, but I think our songs are good enough to be hits, yeah." As far as Hemicuda are concerned, rock and roll ain't no loser's game. "Our first show was sold out, and Jello Biafra was waiting in line to get in," Karen beams. Likewise, as far as the new album goes, nobody's complaining. "We really haven't gotten any bad reviews," she says, "Which is surprising, I figured somebody would hate it. " She pauses for a moment, searching for a negative spin. "We got a good review in this Denver paper, and this guy wrote a letter about it, saying how bad he thought we sucked. That was encouraging," she laughs. "That kind of stuff really makes me want to rock hard."

I ask Karen to take me to the big show, so to speak. What's the live Hemicuda experience like? "A lot of shit talking," Karen says immediately. I figured as much. Couple of live wires, tearing the place up. "Do we start fights?," she asks, repeating my question. "No, we finish them. Well, Anika doesn't, she's, uh..." Karen struggles for diplomacy. "I'm kind of the aggressive one of the two of us." I ask her if she's happy with that dynamic - "Karen's the loud one, Anika's the quiet one." "Oh, she's not quiet," Karen corrects me. "She's just stoned." She laughs. " I don't think that I'm so aggressive that I'm mean. I have a reputation for finishing a couple of things that people started with me, but I'm actually very, very nice, and goofy. Like Marmaduke." Marmaduke with a spiked collar and a dog bowl full of superman juice, maybe.

Speaking of dogs, mine just limped into last place, and I've got to get the hell out of this race track while I still have shoes to walk home in, but it wouldn't be a Sleazegrinder interview without one good road story. Karen is happy to oblige. "It was our first tour, and we were on our way from LA to Phoenix to play with the Street Walkin' Cheetahs, and we forgot about the time change, so we thought we were going to be late. So we're speeding down the highway, going like 110 miles an hour. Our drummer's driving, and meanwhile me and Anika are in the back, getting our whole shtick together, so that we'll be ready for the gig. I'm wearing this corset, it's got head- lights that light up on the boobs, you know, like fenders and tail-lights, and stuff? So, I'm putting this on, and we've got these crazy wigs on, and this cop pulls us over. I hear the siren, the 'whoop, whoop', and we're like, 'fuck', because nothing's going right, and now we're getting stopped by the cops. So the cop walks up to us, and he looks at me and Anika in the back, and then he turns around and gives our drummer a thumbs up, and drives off! I was all ready to give him a story, 'I'm sorry officer, I have a head light out on my dress!'" I've got to admit, that's a classic. "Our tours are all about rock and roll excess," Karen readily admits. "We have tons of stories like that, they just tend to get lost in the wash of our poor memories."

A couple of days after talking to Karen, Anika called me up, wanting to add her side of the Hemicuda story. She was at an amusement park, fittingly enough. Unfortunately, her batteries ran out before we got to roll tape, so look for Hemicuda part 2: Anika's Theme next issue, unless she never gets off that roller coaster. "Classics for Lovers" is available now from Pop Sweatshop records (www.popsweatshop.com) .

DESTROY ALL MONSTERS: THE HUMANOIDS

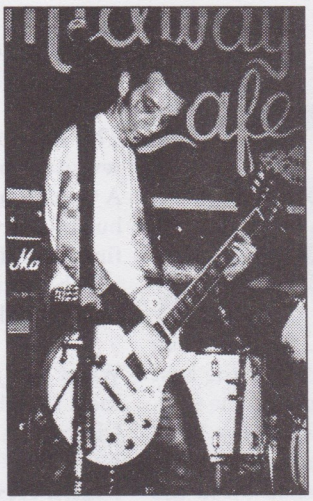
"Humans are such easy prey." -From Beyond



"Motherfucker, you're dripping goo all over me." I'm barking at Clay N. Ferno, head dead guy in Boston's newest (and only) shock-sleaze sensations, the Humanoids. The goo in question is a ginchy greenish mess that's either tattered, necrosis-infected flesh, or just cheap, shoddily-applied greasepaint; it's hard to tell in this light. As the moon shines down on us, bloody and full, Clay croaks through ragged vocal cords fused from rigor mortis. "From behind the grave, we rise..." We are standing in front of a burnt-out crater on Kingston Street in downtown Boston. This was the site of the very first Humanoids show. I ask him if all the venues the Humanoids play in end up like this. "Usually. I mean, sometimes we've got to eat a fan or two to survive. And then there's the gamma rays."

The Humanoids have obviously got the fear factor and grave robbers from outer space ghoul-power down to a sloppy science, but the burning question remains - do they rock, or is this just another sub-Misfits psychobilly ruse? Well, that's the clincher, chicken

brother. Despite the horror punk trappings, once the guitars are strapped onto their rotting torsos, all Hell, fittingly, breaks loose. A giant wall of full-bore motor sleaze pours out of the wheezing speakers, and the still breathing are plunged head first and ass up into a flaming pit of Detroit Rock City riff rawk, showing those Scandi-assed punks in the Hellacopters and Turbonegro how to respect the Rock, America. With the monster pop hooks of vintage Kiss, the cocky twin guitar swagger of the New York Dolls, and the rampant pussy obsession of Ted Nugent, The Humanoids are like a 7-day weekend's worth of heartbreak, hard-ons, and hangovers, circa 1975. Except, y'know, dead.



Unearthed by an errant undertaker two years ago, the Humanoids have slunk around after dark, wielding their scorching brand of total rock chaos cloak-and-dagger fashion, at abandoned mine shafts, Satan parties, and dubious barbeques, waiting for the proper solar alignment to launch their horror holocaust worldwide. Smelling the stench of the next big thing, Star hustler Marc Schleicher has just beat a debut single out of these well dressed hard rock zombies, and their splintered bones are being welded back together in some ill-lit mad scientist's lab as we speak to ready the dying young men for a flurry of big time, grave cheating, live (?) spectacles. Lock up your living dead girls, the flesh feast is on... .

"They don't have rock and roll girls in space," Clay informs me. "Or beer. That's why we came to Earth." The other four Humanoids have arrived now too, presumably smelling my still pumping blood. I'm a little confused as to just what kind of creatures are circling me with fiendish grins. Came to earth? I thought they were zombies. "We're both, obviously," Mike Demonic tells me. "We're undead Aliens from an unknown planet." Fair enough, but I don't think Kiss or the MC5, two of the Humanoids' dominant influences, ever toured Mars. "We received earthly radio transmissions," Johnny Machine, lead guitarist, mutters through blackened lips." But they stopped in the late 70s. I think they take a long time to get up there." Joey Sin, bass, adds, "So when we beamed down two years ago, and turned on your human radio, we were pretty horrified at what we heard. We then knew what our mission was...to save rock and roll." And eat some brains along the way, presumably.

The Humanoids seriously rock.

Clay: Well, I'm half-Swedish and half-zombie. Maybe the Swedish part helps.

Are you guys enjoying our puny planet?
Sinister: We can't praise you enough for your Earth drugs.

Are The Humanoids trying to make zombies sexy?
Johnny: We're glam zombies. We like leather pants. They feel like a second coating of human flesh.

Zombies seem too slow for rock.
Clay: No way, you ever see the "Thriller" video? Just add a beat, and they pep right up.

Given the image...
Clay: It's not an image. This is the way we look. Sometimes we put on human faces for the ladies, but we're dead, man.

Have you had to fight your way out of a gig yet?
Joey: Even the drunkest of assholes doesn't want to take on a zombie.
Johnny: We played at a punk gig that didn't work out so well. I think they were expecting us to sound like the Misfits. There was silence in between the songs, it was terrible. Some kid came up to me after the gig, all pissed off, and said, "You guys sound like fucking...rock and roll."
Mike: You're Goddamn right we do
.

How did your first recording sessions go? Were they filled with panic and terror?
Mike: They were excellent. Marc and Nick Z really understand zombie rock from outer space. They must have visited our planet.
Clay: We're releasing two singles. Four A-sides. Nothing but hits for the Humanoids.

When are they coming out?
Mike: In a couple months. As soon as we get our tax returns. I mean, as soon as we exchange our Martian dollars.

You have your own website. Not bad for the undead.
Clay: It's www.thehumanoids.com.I did it from outer space. I took a correspondence course via satellite. I just kept beaming down pictures of the pirate and the turtle until they let me in.

Give me the Humanoids top 5 hits from Hell...
Mike: MC5 - "The Big Bang".
Clay: "The Sacrilious Sounds of the Supersuckers".
Joey: "Grande Rock" by the Hellacopters.
Johnny: Anything by Kiss.

Anything? "Animalize"?
Johnny: No, not "Animalize". "Double Platinum", you'll be all set.
Sinister: David Lee Roth-era Van Halen. "Women and Children First."

Right on. So, what are the Humanoids willing to do to save rock and roll?
Mike: I am willing and ready to wrap a Ferrari around a tree and hang out with 14-year old girls, if that will help.

CELEBRITY RATE-A-RECORD, PART 1:

Frankenstein Drag Queens from Planet 13 are, like the Humanoids, flesh-eating ghouls from outer space. You know these guys?
Clay: Never seen them around, no. Our planet isn't divisible by any numbers.

Now you know what I'm dealing with. I'm surrounded by flesh-eating ghouls in leather jackets and AC/DC t-shirts, and there's only one other thing that can slake their unholy thirst, and that's rock. Luckily, I have a whole steaming pile of it with me, so I toss it to the dead boys and watch them tear into it. Here are the results.

(I would be remiss, incidentally, if I didn't mention that this bit was conceived and flawlessly executed by the cleverly-named and always inventive JD Monroe a decade ago in the pages of the sadly defunct *Ready To Snap* magazine. I however, perfected the art of

keeping the all-star reviewers completely off-topic.)

Tormentula - "Lure of the Grime" (Speakeasy)
www.tormentula.com



The picture of Tormentula on the cover of this single looks like three teenage glam rock chicks whose faces got pushed through a windshield at 60 miles per hour and were sewn back together with fishing wire. Beauty defiled by corpse-paint. The back cover features a close-up of one of their spandexed asses. Without even hearing the record, we're all ready to declare Tormentula the best rock and roll band in America. Mike drops the needle onto the wax, and something wounded and evil slithers out of the speakers. "The Lure of the Grime" sounds like "The Ballad of Dwight Frye" as performed by a bunch of crazy girls that have been locked up in the attic for ll years. The declaration stands.

Johnny: I can't stop staring at this record cover.
Clay: I can't wait to party with these chicks

Yeah, but what do you think about the song?
Johnny: What song?

Speedfreaks - "Sick!Sick!Sick!" (Boogie Bastard)
www.boogiebastard.com
I'm guessing these cats are German, what with the gutteral way the singer's barking. The Speedfreaks come out swinging wildly, like a PCP-crazed cock rocker taking the Sunset Strip down with a machete. Ferocious, full-throttle gonzo rock.
Johnny: Fuck, yeah. Sounds like the Dictators.
Mike: Any rock song that's actually about rock gets bonus points with me.
Johnny: Motorcycle rock.

You know how to ride a motorcycle?
Johnny: No. But I'm getting one, though.

I learned how to ride in the parking lot of the Super Stop and Shop. I came this close to driving right through the plate glass window. It was on a Ninja 1000. I had no idea how to use a clutch. I popped a wheelie, I was going full throttle.
Johnny: How'd you stop it?

I remembered there was a brake at the last second. I dropped the bike, though. That was a whole scene, as well. It weighed like a thousand pounds.
Johnny: Sweet. I can't wait to get one.

Noise of Reality - "Fuck You" (Bootleg Booze)
www.bootlegbooze.cjb.net
The best song called "Fuck You" I've ever heard, and I've heard hundreds. Given the song's title, and the horrible band name, you'd probably assume this is some lame-ass hardcore record. Well it ain't, jack. This is pure fists-of-fury biker rock, played at blinding speed. Bonus points for sampling a motorcycle revving during the guitar solo. Their name sticks in the Humanoids craw, however.
Johnny: Those fucking Swedes, man. I mean, they're not real Americans, but they do a great job with the rock. These guys remind me of Gluecifer, fucking awesome.
Clay: They should change their name, though.

To what?
Clay: Something with 'The" in the title, that's always rock. The Reality Boys. No, the Noise Dolls, maybe.

The Exploders - Electric Power (Rip-Off)
www.corpusnet.com/exploders
A Canadian band that goes for MC5-styled Murder City mayhem, but in a stripped-down, garage-y sort of way. As the record plays, I find myself distracted by the cover of the new Humanoids single, which features a pile of rock ephemera - panties, Dio records, liquor bottles, and pills.

What are these green and white pills supposed to be? They look like Prozac.
Clay: Actually, they're allergy pills.

Right. Hey, you guys ever been to Canada?
Clay: I've been to downtown Canada.

Downtown Canada?!
Clay: Yeah, like a couple of miles away from the airport, you know?

OK. Hey, if you turn the Dio logo upside down, it's supposed to...
Clay: I heard that from some kid in the 4th grade. I had a Dio pin on my jacket, and he said, "You know what that symbol means?"
Joey: Wait, what's it supposed to say?

"Evil". It doesn't though.
Clay: No. It says 'OID".

Adam West - "Piece of Ass" (Fandango)
www.fandangorecs.com
A menacing, rock and roll punch in the mouth, AC/DC riding a fucking rocket to Russia. One of the biggest favorites of the day, Adam West are motherfuckers of the highest order.
Mike: This is some bad ass...
Johnny: Heavy fucking rock.
Mike: With some, uh...southern-ness going on.
Joey: Although I've got to say that the lead singer sounds like Gene Simmons.

Gene Simmons is a dick.
Clay: I bet they're all dicks. Everybody in KISS is a dick, except maybe for Ace Frehley.

Are Adam West dicks?
Mike: No, Adam West are kick-ass 70's rock. Let's listen to that again.
Johnny: And there's a naked chick on the cover of this, so you can bring it into the bathroom with you.

The Confessions - "Beautiful Sin" (Craptacular)
www.leechpit.com
Mike Demonic has put the single on at the wrong speed, as a blurring high-pitched chirp bursts out of the speakers.
Mike: Sorry. I thought I had it right, I mean it's got a big hole.

Clay: I thought it was the medium from "Poltergeist" singing. After adjusting the speed, we settle in for 3 minutes of rocking.
Joey: This sounds good for dancing.
Clay: Makes me wish we had some chicks with us. And a 30-pack. That's what we do next time. The rate a rate-a-record dance party.
Mike: We couldn't do that, man. The dancing chicks would make the records skip.

BEWARE THE SOUL-LESS COOL: GETTING LOOSE WITH THE CONFESSIONS



"My bass amp caught on fire. The whole works, smoke, flame...I just kept doing what I was doing, man, rolling around the floor or whatever. People said, 'you must have been bummed out,' but you know, that's show-biz."

While we're on the subject, I talked to the pride of Colorado Springs, the Confessions' grand poobah, Mr. Loose Cannon, about the perils of high-elevation rock and roll. Out of the half million or so bands I've heard in the past six months that cop a heavy Johnny Thunders vibe to make it though the night, the only ones to turn my hipster-burnout snarl into a smile are the Confessions. Maybe that's because they dig back into the Dolls catalog for inspiration, forging sleaze punk with R&B swagger. They play hip-shaking rock and roll, in other words. Cats like Loose and his confessin' clan make me think that baby, maybe it ain't too late after all, and that this beautiful sin we've created ain't never gonna die...

Loose, brother, how did we get here? "We started out as teenagers in the Deadites, playing Misfits kinda stuff, and our lyrics were ripped from the scripts of the "Twilight Zone". The horror train started running out of steam, and we were already getting into the rock and roll thing anyway." It ought to be noted that the Confessions ain't so far away from the Prom even now. "Yeah, man, we're still young, we got a lot of rocking to get to," Loose says. Don't hold their age against them, though, because they already sound like they've been scraping stickers off the wall at CBGB's for ten years. Even their name sounds like they've been around for awhile. "The Confessions sounded black, like it had soul," he explains. I ask him if sounding black is a good career move in Colorado. Turns out it isn't." Denver's like the lost Island of long-haired metal kids. It's the radio station out here, KLO. I don't know what they're doing to them, playing all this rap-rock. You start praying for old Guns n'Roses." Amen, brother. I'm whispering the same prayers myself. I tell him I like the idea of the rockers in leopard skin mixing it up with the baseball cap crowd, if only for the mayhem. "My singers always getting into fistfights," Loose laughs. "We were playing a show and this kid came up to him in a Cannibal Corpse t-shirt. He was wearing a Union Jack on his jacket, so this kid says, 'Are you British?' My singer says, 'No, are you in Cannibal Corpse?,' and they got into it." You start to wonder if there's any hope at all for these rage-o-matic little bastards. "The kids all look like they want to punch somebody, because they don't how to do anything else," Loose agrees. " The Confessions are teaching them how to dance," he says hopefully. "I mean, you gotta rock, but don't forget to roll, y'know?" I ask Loose what the Confessions' major inspirations are. Without flinching, he tells me, "Sex and booze, ruin, heartbreak and rock and roll." I believe him, for once. The single and smattering of demo cuts I've heard from the Confessions reeks of it all, losing hands and winning smiles. Every rock and roll band has at least one song in their catalog that serves as a sort of half-assed manifesto. I ask Loose which one serves the Confessions best. "'I like you better when you're drunk.' At least, that's what people usually tell us after a show."

The Confessions are recording their debut full-length this summer. Check out their website, www.leechpit.com, for details.

CELEBRITY RATE-A-RECORD, PART 2:

Trash Brats - "Must Be the Cocaine" (I-94)
www.community.webtv.net/i94rec/I94recordings
Detroit's finest lay down a swaggering motor punk hit single, one of their best. The tape is a mess of various Humanoids screaming over the gangland chorus about how much these guys kick ass. I gotta agree with them...
Would rock and roll be better if cocaine was free?
Mike: Naw, I'm all set with that, thanks. I had my little phase.

Your "little phase"?
Mike: Well, you can only get so high, and then it's the next day and you're at your niece's christening, y'know, and you can't even remember your name. Then it's not so cool anymore.

Ricochets - "Fall Down Dead" (Bad Afro)
www.badafro.dk
Another example of Scandinavian devil music - scorching riff rock, fake American accents, and real Swedish snarls.
You guys ever fell that way? "If I don't have a beer, I'm gonna fall down dead"?
Johnny: It's usually the other way around.
Clay: Yeh, like, "If I have another beer, I'm gonna fall down dead."

Hammerlock - "Whiskey Rebel" (Steel Cage)
www.hammerlock.net



Everybody's jaws drop when the needle hits the grooves on this record. Barbrawling biker rock, tough as nails, liquored up and ready for anything
Johnny: Holy shit, I love Hammerlock!
Clay: 4 stars, it's awesome, my favorite record of the day!
Mike: That shit is hard as nails. I want a record, or a t-shirt, or some leg warmers, or something.
Rancid Vat's rough and ready scuzz-rock grace the flipside, with a tune called "Job-Jumper", a song about thee Whiskey Rebel's many torturous day jobs, which sparks a debate about who's had the worst job.
Mike: I worked at Chuck E. Cheese.

You win.
Mike: I worked in the kitchen, and every half an hour the manager would come in to do "fun checks". It was horrible.

"Fun checks"?
Mike: Yeah, he'd come in and go, "Is everybody having fun?," and

you'd have to go "YAAYY!" I'd do anything to get out of there. I used to volunteer to take out the trash all the time. I'd get my hands filthy, covered in all this slimy garbage juice, then I'd go right back in and make pizzas without washing my hands.
Clay: Mine was worse. Chester's Fried Chicken. We got no business, because we were on this busy road, like around the corner and down the hill, so you couldn't even see it from the road. So to drum up business, they sent me down by the highway, dressed in a chicken suit.
Mike: With a cowboy hat.
Clay: Yeah. Chicken suit with a cowboy hat.

This was for a whole 8 hours?
Clay: Oh yeah. And if it wasn't busy, they'd make me go mow the fucking lawn.
Mike: Was this in the summertime?
Clay: Yeah, and they only had one suit, so it smelled like everyone that ever wore it. Like ass, cigarettes, and chicken.
Ok, you win.

Antiseen - "Sabu" (Steel Cage)
jcantiseen@aol.comna
Everybody in the room is well aware of Antiseen's reputation, so no one wants to admit their dislike for this noise rock catastrophe, like Jeff Clayton himself is gonna bust through the front door to bust our knee caps with a monkey wrench if we bad-mouth it.
Mike: The best thing about this is that the guy is wearing a Hammerlock t-shirt.

I don't want these guys beating me up, or anything...
Clay: I was just thinking the same thing.

But if I was at a show, and this was going on in front of me, I'd leave.
Clay: Me too. But I'm going to say this is a good record anyway.

Chicken Hawks - "Live As Hell" (Steel Cage)
www.steelcagerecords.com
The only band in Iowa, and they sound like some broke-assed Cramps. Loose as hell, and stripped so far down to the bone, you can taste marrow. The Chickenhawks are the definition of primal. A chick in a fur bikini never hurt the cause, either.
Clay: I'd like to see this live. Well, I'd like to see the chick in the bikini live, anyway.
Johnny: It's almost as if the fuzzy pink bikini blocks out her screaming.

Vultures - "Alcoholic Lady" (Dirt Nap)
thevultures1@yahoo.com
Well, the song's pleasant, if forgettable, garage rawk, probably the most "retro" thing we've heard today; but the song's got a great title, doesn't it?
Any of you guys ever had an alcoholic lady?
Johnny: Clay did.
Clay: I definitely did. I had a lady that would go around the house, drinking whatever was left in the bottles lying around. One night I was putting on the dirty moves, and she was so drunk, she poked me in the eye, so I had to call it quits.
Johnny: These guys are from Seattle. That's a point against them right there.
Clay: This is pretty good, though. It's kind of evil, kind of rock. It reminds me of stuff like the B-Movie Rats. It's a little too garage-y for me to listen to everyday, but I like it.

Nearly Deads - "Gimmie Some Credit" (Jonny Cat)
www.thenearlydeads.homestead.com
I thought that the Chickenhawks were as bare-bones as we were going to get today, but the Nearly Deads are so stripped down that they're a duo - guitar and drums. They manage to make an ungodly roots rock racket anyway. The Royal Trux/ Knoxville Girls crowd are gonna eat these cats up.

Mike: Are you sure this is just two people?

Yeah. I bet they like to play Johnny Cash to warm up the crowd.
Mike: We never get to choose what they play before we go on, but it's usually Van Halen.

"Van Halen 2" and "Appetite For Destruction" are the only albums you should be allowed to play before a band goes on.
Clay: Once somebody asked us if they could play "Power-Age" before we went on. That was cool.
Johnny: Maybe the Pistols.
Mike: But probably Van Halen.

What about this record?
Clay: We wouldn't play this record before we went on, no.

No, man. I mean, what do you think of the record?
Clay: I think I want to hear the next one.

Hymans - "Great Night for a Burglary" (Fandango)
www.fandangorecs.com
These Swedes, or Germans, or whatever they are sound exactly like the Ramones, on purpose. I dunno why.
Mike: This record has the same problem, the hole's too small. I'm gonna have to take it off with the spatula, so it gets points off.
Clay: What's next? I already own this album. A couple of them. "Rocket to Russia", "Leave Home", etc.

Gutter Queens - "Teenage Wasteland"
www.gutterqueens.com
Swedish drag queens, with one real chick blowing the curve, pulling out all the stops on some 80's glam revival, sounding a lot like the old Finnish Poison-wannabe's Easy Action. I bet they have a confetti cannon.

Johnny: It's KISS! It's "Deuce"!
Mike: I can't tell which one is the real chick. That's it, no more shots for us.
Clay: I wish the vocals were a little more ballsy.
Mike: Yeah, I don't really feel like she's livin' in a teenage wasteland.
Johnny: Make us feel it! Take us to the teenage wasteland!

I wonder if it takes longer for them to look like chicks then for you guys to look like zombies?
Clay: Why do you always ask us about that? I told you, we're already zombies.
Johnny: Yeah, but it would be nice if all five of us didn't have to share the same mirror, though.



Ghoultown - "Tales From the Dead West" (Angry Planet)
www.ghoultown.com
A wild mixture of cow-punk and spaghetti western music, creepy and cool. The pictures of the sultry goth chick bass player on the CD booklet proves terribly distracting to the Humanoids, however.
Mike: Before we even listen to this, I think we should all take a look at the cans on this girl.

One of the songs is called "The Death of Jonah Hex". How cool is that?
Mike: What the fuck is a "Jonah Hex"?

It's a comic book from the 70s, dude.
Johnny: Alright, but did you see this guy's jacket? With the bones on the sleeves? Fuck, that's cool.
Clay: This is like "Day of the Dead" music..."Ghost Riders in the Sky".
Johnny: Normally, I don't care for the horns, but it's working for me here.
Joey: You know what's working for me? This hot bass player. Maybe we could work together on something. "Flight of the Bumblebee 2".

What?
Joey: It's the bass player from Manowar doing "Flight of the Bumblebee" as a bass solo. It's fucking great.
Mike: No, it's fucking terrible.
Clay: I would like to see Ghoultown, they're unique. I like it. I want to go down to the quarry with the bass player.

Negligents - "The Fuss"
www.negligents.com
To be fair, these are just demos, but this power-poppy garage rock is just not delivering the goods, and we're discussing the dubious merits of Iron Maiden before the first song has even bled itself dry.

I think these guys might be Canadian.
Mike: The record says Chicago.
Joey: Chicago's not in Canada, is it?
Mike: Do I look like I have a fucking map?
Johnny: These guys sound like they still need to be plugged in.

Polyplush Cats - "Driving it Home"
www.polyplushcats.com
Kind of a dark, suburban glam sound with mainstream aspirations. Good luck.
Mike: This is weird, man. All the songs on this album are named after old hair metal bands. This one's called "Skid Row".
Joey: "Cinderella", "Warrant". You know, I won a Warrant album once, in cub scouts, when I was 14.

I never owned a Warrant album, never even heard them, really, except for snatches of "Cherry Pie' on VH1.
Joey: Well, you're not missing much.

I know that they spent most of the 90s playing frat-houses, though.
Clay: What about these guys?

I think they'll probably end up playing frat-houses, too.

Dead Sheriff - "Rock is Real"
www.deadsheriff.com
After a bit of a dry spell that was starting to freak us out, Dead Sheriff arrive to save the day. Rip-snorting Norwegian action rock, every song an anthem extolling the glories of doing time in Rock City. These cats are bad asses.
Mike: These guys have a lot of songs with "Rock" in the title. That's always a good sign.

How many Humanoids tune have "rock" in the title?
Clay: Two, so far. "Gamma Ray Rock" and "Rock and Roll Feeling".
Johnny: That's our sexy song, you know, for the ladies.
Mike: If I ever have the money to buy a record again, this'll be the one.



Blue Period - "Nightlife Casualties" (League of Bureaucracy)
www.blue-period.com
Blue Period reek of LA, churning out cliched glam metal, albeit with some New Wave influences bubbling to the top. The singer, however, is a big problem. His voice is terribly fey, making every song sound like high camp, and the scenester worship lyrics don't help any. But it's this cat's look that's really disturbing. He looks like the hottest flat-chested chick you've ever seen. A concept none of us want to deal with.
Mike: That's a dude? That's not a dude...fuck, that's a dude?
Clay: Uh, oh. This isn't very good.

I'm not here to question my sexuality today, man.
Johnny: Fuckin' right. Somebody take this picture away from me, I don't want to think about it anymore.
Clay: Next record, please.

Cripple Creek Fairies - "Olympic Dude Cruise"
sludgehammer@hotmail.com
The band name and song title would lead you to believe - well, I don't know what, but something other than the way the Fairies sound. They sound like AC/DC on a fishing trip. Balls out rawk, sure, but relaxed somehow, like Mr. Clean with nothing to prove. The sound of muscles reclining.

Any of you guys ever been on a "Dude Cruise"?
All: No!
Johnny: But this one guy looks like Conan O'Brien, so they get bonus points.

Sinis - "Electromagnetized" (Live Evil)
www.sinisrocks.com

HIT SQUAD

Good lord. Sinis are from Texas, there'll be no mistaking that. They sound like some Japanese monster movie version of ZZ Top, gigantic southern boogie metal. Insurrection rock.
Johnny: Remember the Alamo!
Clay: These guys are fucking great.
Johnny: Yeh, this is a success. And there's a guy in the band named Johnny Thundernips, so that gets added points.

This is the way you want a band from Texas to sound.
Joey: Totally. Slide guitar!
Mike: That was so right on.
Clay: that was fucking beautiful.

Granny's 12 Gauge - "High Decibel Desolation"
www.g12g.com
G12G add a little mountain-top twang to the standard riff-rock formula, back porch whiskey bottle lamentations gone electric.
Johnny: This reminds me of the Hookers.
Mike: Yeh. It's no "Rock and Roll Motherfucker", though. But you know, it's pretty rocking. I'd take it on a long drive with me. If I ever left the fuckin' house.

Slim - "Electric Hoss" (Z&S)
www.slim69.com
Slim are a power trio of muscle-necked, tin can-eating cowboy brawlers, like the Flesh Eaters welded onto Danzig's fists. If these fuckers weren't from Texas, they'd be in prison. This record is all about hammer-of God biker metal pummel played straight down the line.
Mike: These guys sound like they win a lot of fights.

It's like Pantera covering a Hellacopters song.
Johnny: Aerosmith in overalls.
Mike: Jesus, that's rowdy.

Peter Pan Speedrock - "Killer Machine" (Adrenalin)
www.speedrock.com
Speedrock is right, as these cats tear a hole through the speakers with a blistering display of Motor City influenced Euro-scorch. Speedrock would fit in nicely with Speedealer, Zeke, and the Hookers at the caffeine rehab.
Mike: Please don't tell me that we're gonna listen to a band called "Peter Pan".

Here's the story - if I can get these guys some press, than they'll take our pals in Lamont to Europe. So if you want Pete and the boys to tour over there, say some good things about these guys.
Clay: OK, they're good. Tell Pete to bring us back some hash.
Mike: No butt-hole hash, though. We don't want it if it's been up his ass.
Clay: Yeah, we do.

Want to be judges mercilessly by your peers? Then send your junk to me, I'll take it to the streets. Next time: Rock star chicks...



SLEAZEGRINDER'S TOP 10:

The Lanternjack - 'Hussy' (www.thelanternjack.com) Sexy, fire-breathing rock and roll that's actually from Detroit, for once. Sleaze metal über alles, brothers and sisters - fans of Smack and the Comatones rejoice. If this record was a porn flick, you'd never get past the first five minutes. Absolutely essential.

Betty Blowtorch - "Are You Man Enough?" (www.bettyblow-torch.com) Hit after raunchy pop metal hit from these LA vets. What if Nashville Pussy were actually good? I mean, can you dig it?

Hardcore Superstar - "Bad Sneakers and Piña Coladas" (www.hardcoresuperstar.com) The Swedish Buckcherry, with less bad habits and better songs. Finally released in America. Well, almost. Canada's a little closer, anyway.

The Dolly Rots - demo (www.dollyrots.com) The Powder Puff girls go punk. The Dollyrots feature the vocals of Kelly, who's got the cutest squeak I've ever heard, a couple octaves higher than Kay Hanley, if that's possible. Impossibly catchy bubblepunk, and one of the songs is even called "Motorcycle Boy". How fucking cool is that?

Isabelle's Gift - "Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms" (www.isabellesgift.com) The Backyard Babies and Corrosion of Conformity take it outside for a busted bottle knuckle duster. Ultimately, COC win, but it's one hell of a fight.

Rock City Crimewave - "Sounds from the Underworld" (www.neckbone.com) No one understands the aesthetic power of the word "motherfucker" like Rock City Crimewave. A humanary stew of every cool rock and roll band and outrageous B-movie ever made, "Sounds from the Underworld" is here to remind you that yes, it is all about dope, guns, and fucking in the streets. So get to it.

Cookie - "Sweat Soaked and Satisfied" (www.cookiefactory.com) Texacala Jones takes a stab at fronting Motley Crüe. The results are glorious.

The Cult - "Beyond Good and Evil" (www.purecult.com) Having given us permission to rock again, the Cult deliver with an album that gives us something to work with. A return to form blazer with the crunch of "Electric", the melody of "Love", and the sheer heaviness of "Sonic Temple". Religious in its devotion to the almighty rock. Worship appropriately.

Mary Magdelene - demo (www.mary-magdelene.com) Veruca Sweet. Probably the best unsigned band in America.

Cracktorch - "Is Not the Problem" (www.neckbone.com) The greatest rock and roll band since Thin Lizzy. How's that for a definitive statement? Sure man, God gave rock and roll to you - but Cracktorch show you how to use it.

SLEAZEGRINDER

THE PRETTIEST GIRL IN THE WORLD

"Love is all good people need, and music sets the sick ones free." - Andy Wood
"A strong girl is like an ocean." -Iggy Pop

Brothers and sisters, saints and sinners, those that would can't cast no spell on me, because the Sleazegrinder, after 32 years of the struggle, has finally found his Rita Coolidge. Her name is Stacey, she likes cartoons and hip British pop. She looks like a supermodel from the 70s, with movie star hair and big green eyes. She laughs at my jokes, even when she doesn't get them. And I love her terribly. So much so that I'm marrying her on October 12th. Dimitri Monroe will, of course, be my best man. As you would expect, we are celebrating with a rock and roll blowout featuring all the bands that I expound on endlessly in these pages on Saturday, October 13th at the historic Middle East club in Cambridge, Massachusetts. You're invited. I just want to thank Zodiac, Ian (Astbury and Adams), and Kris Kristofferson for helping me get this far. Long live rock and roll. ⊕

As usual, you can find me lurking around in the same bad neighborhoods: *Kenzilla69@hotmail.com*
Ken McIntyre / 42 Cedar Street, 3rd floor / Somerville, MA 02143



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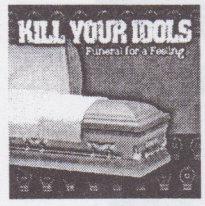
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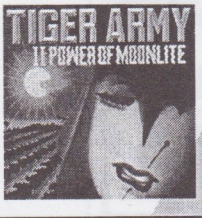
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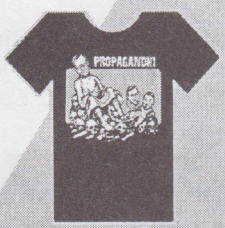
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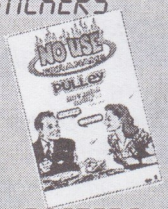




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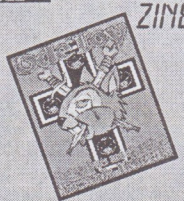
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JUKEBOX JURY

BY JEFF JAREMA

A barometer of our current climate of ever increasing uncoolness is just how difficult it is to locate a watering hole housing an action-packed jukebox. Now, I'm not picky. I'll patronize a modern day, ugly-ass CD juke as long as it's stocked with at least two or three decent discs. But as a rule, the current breed of boxes operating out there on the alcohol-licensed landscape are chock-full o' crap like that which continues to plant a black eye on the good name of "pop", "punk", and "country".

But hey, at a hometown Raleigh, NC club called Kings, I was surprised recently to run into one of those loud digital bill-op updates that features "Raw Power", "Funhouse" (might've been a CDR of box set outtakes; either that or someone slipped something in my Guinness 'cause that's sure what it sounded like), Velvet Underground, Sonics, Elvis' "Sun Sessions", and "Aftermath" (!!!). What equally flipped my wig was the seventies raunch to be had for mere bar litter coinage, including "Thunderbird" by ZZ Top (recorded live in '75, so Billy Gibbons hasn't ruined it just yet with synth-drums), "Fireball" by Deep Purple, and the most mind-blowing of all, the "red" second album by Grand Funk Railroad ("Got This Thing On The Move", natch)! Kudos to Kings! Depending on my mood, I dig their jukebox more than my own. Request to Kings: Please add "Brain Capers".

There's a real glut of great reissues out at the moment (or at least queued up for imminent re-release). Of course, the second box set of "Nuggets" (on Rhino) is now available, and this time the theme is non-US mod freakout knockouts...mostly. First of all, the mere appearance of this new four-CD set is fairly miraculous. For decades, UK bands that failed to gain any US acceptance (think the Move or Pretty Things) have been a cause célèbre of many a rock critic yet have remained poorly served in the domestic reissue racks. This deluxe global overview captures not only the UK's best of the rest (those that followed the Beatles, the Stones, and the Who's moves), but expands upon that to cover even more Un-American activities of the "freakbeat" variety, all the way from the Nordics to the Far East.

Particularly spotlighted within are Holland and Australia, two undeniably fertile scenes that produced, as can be heard here, more than a few acts that were every bit as vital as the UK's multi-national chart toppers. The Dutch Outsiders and their fellow countrymen the Motions, Cuby & the Blizzards, and Q65 rank as four largely forgotten bands (even in their homeland, where "Venus" by Shocking Blue and "Radar Love" by Golden Earring are always better remembered) that nevertheless fully deserve the attention belatedly being lavished upon 'em. On "Nuggets II" the six selections afforded these groups are the perfect primer for anyone wishing to check out the longhaired, unruly, under-appreciated Dutch beat scene of the mid-sixties.

"Sorry" may not be the most definitive moment for Australia's Easybeats. Heck, considering the uncorked enthusiasm of their sole US hit "Friday On My Mind", it's possibly not even their most exciting performance. But for yours truly, "Sorry" stands as reason alone for plunking down fifty or sixty bucks for this box. (After all, you might pay as much on ebay for a scratchy 45 copy of this '66 killer). With its jackhammer rhythm guitar, this is a worthy candidate for testing out your stereo equipment on "11" (apologies for the cliché, but a preview blastfull of this amounted to a near religious experience).

Buy this box while you can. If it doesn't sell, there'll never be another compilation effort on this scale, where loud, beautiful master tapes are licensed legal-like from all points on the globe. Trust me, never again will you be able to accumulate such thrashing post-mod noise as the Craig (featuring groundbreaking guitar and drum frenzy, the latter provided by a teenage and apparently violent-natured Carl Palmer. Dig that cymbal smashing insanity), Les Fleur De Lys (covering and beating the Who with "Circles"), the Downliners Sect (more covers; this time copping Pre-VU Reed/Cale with snarling vocal 'n' fuzz results), and the Red Squares (from the sound of their murderously miscast backing track, even bigger pillheads than the Craig).

There's the untamed '64 punk-R&B sound of the Pretty Things, the Primitives and, don't let the name fool you, the Fairies. Canuck nuts like the Ugly Ducklings, the Haunted, and the Jury sound more like savage-variety garage bands from our side of the border. The Guess Who's stock goes way up with their '67 fuzz bass screamer, "It's My Pride", a real fine skeleton in their closet.

To tell the truth, I prefer the straightforward immediacy of the US garage bands of the same era, which can be enjoyed on the first "Nuggets" box set. For example, look no further than the US-transplanted Misunderstood and their "Children Of The Sun" included on 'II'. These guys take the Yardbirds as a point of departure but beat the living @#$% out of that style, ripping through the most muscular, maniacal punk rock of the pre-punk era.

If anybody would care to admit it, several of these UK "genius" records are, by comparison, just a marginal singer saved by a flashy or clangorous instrumental break. This comment holds true for the much worshipped Eyes, John's Children (who digs this limp garbage?), and most certainly the snivelling early Bowie track. Even more extreme examples of this deception are massively amazing backing tracks by the aforementioned Fleur De Lys ("Mud In Your Eye"; ultimate godlike guitar and throbbing instro undercurrent, but mush-mouthed singer that I rate overrated) and the all-time legendary "Crawdaddy Simone", which is fun but not extraordinary Brit R&B that is pushed to a roaring, apocalyptic climax which ranks as a beat'era precursor to the Stooges' "L.A. Blues".

I could whine a bit 'bout the inclusion of some circa '67/68 psychlite such as Rupert's People's watered down shade of pale or the Golden Earring's "Daddy Buy Me A Girl" (even the title is wimpy; its place on 'Nuggets' was probably secured less for the song than the memory stirred by the dancing kitten in the song's promo video). Most of this type o' stuff is less familiar to me, anyway, so I'm not yet in a great position to judge. I tend to skip over some of it. The Kaleidoscope draws favorable comparison to the early Pink Floyd singles, though. In his *Hit List* coverage, Bale will surely raise a complaint over Timebox (I know, 'cause he shared his ire

with me already), but I like them more than a little. Marmalade sound good, too (thought their song was akin to a later Creation track until the chirpy harmonies kicked-in), despite their very silly shirts.

Better yet, in a considerable upgrade from how it sounded on the old legit-or-not "Broken Dreams" series, I can now enjoy the majesty of "14 Hour Technicolor Dream" by the almighty Syn. When cranked up at speaker-shredding volume, this doesn't have the same earthquake intensity as the Misunderstood's "Children Of The Sun" or the Easybeats' "Sorry", to be quite honest, but it's the best way to pierce your ear drums with "Beck's Bolero"-like wailing melody from future Yes-man Peter Banks (Yes' Chris Square also appears in the Syn with his busy bass and an even worse haircut than during his "Tales From a Topographic Ocean" days). By the way, great singer on this one.

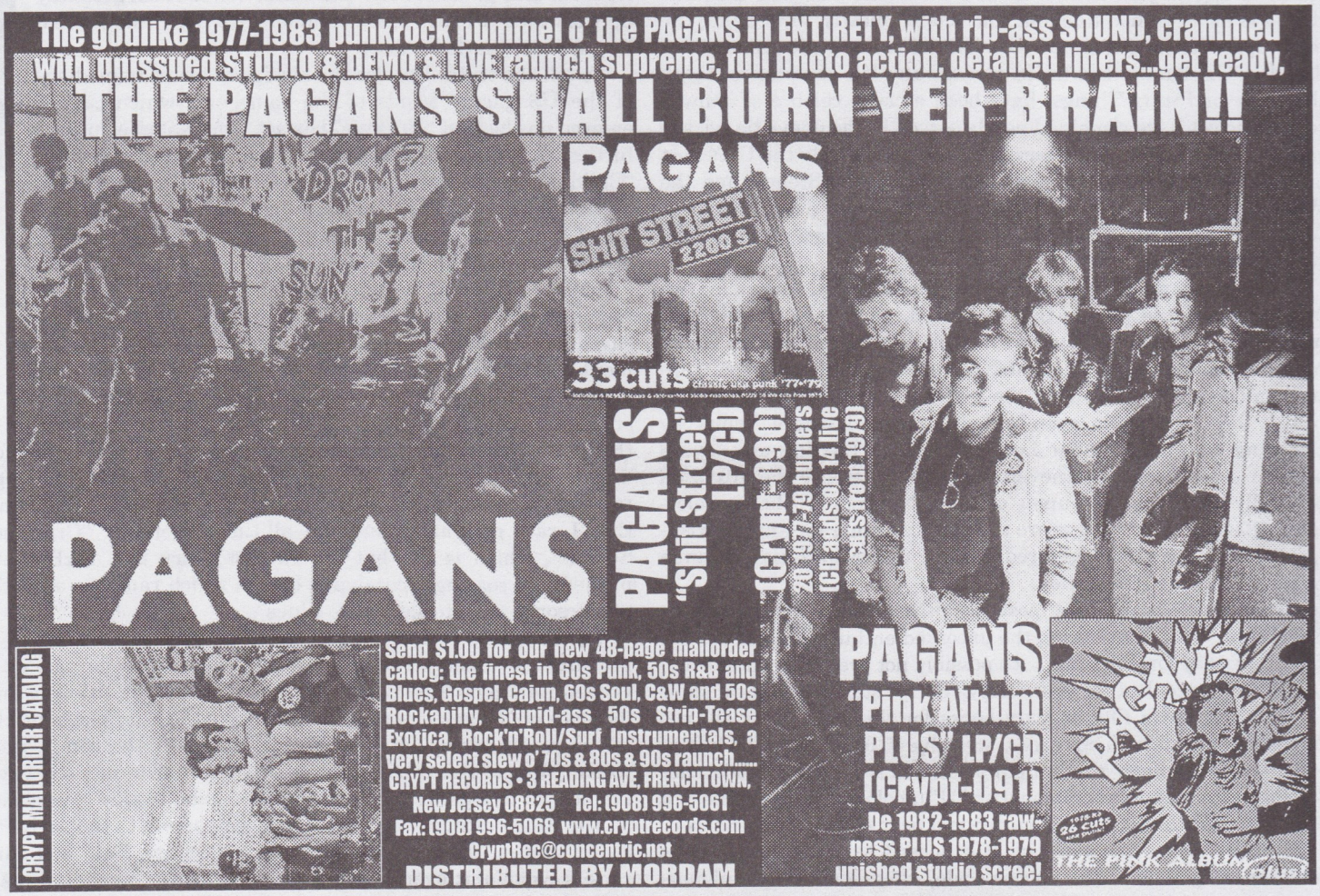
Inevitably, there are a few errors, either in selection (wrong versions, most notably the Wheels at the expense of the same but somehow wilder Wheel-a-Ways) or, for the record collector police, faulty font and credit flaws. Getting back to track selection faux paws, who's bright idea was it to snub the Attack, Them Belfast Gypsies or, for God's sake, "Girl" by Johnny Kendall & the Heralds (OK, I'm being sarcastic, but what a great record, like a Dutch Barry & the Remains)? Also, why only one Outsiders tune?

As with the Stateside 'Nuggets' box set, Rhino apparently accepted for final track selection a wildcard write-in ballot from a nuthouse inhabitant. Last time, everyone at the label had a big laugh with this by slapping the putrid German-based Monks on a US-only set of otherwise AM radio garage classics. This time, however, they've gone too far with a pile of experimental Brazilian horse dung known not to me as Os Mutantes. Yes, I've seen 'em in *Ugly Things*, but I can't say I'm in on the joke. Nor do I want to be. What is this, bossa nova?! (Maybe I'll download a bunch of this comedy act's lame recordings, burn 'em on a CD, and hawk it for big bucks on ebay as the ultra-rare, unreleased "Buster Poindexter on Acid" LP).

To pull all this back into perspective, Os Mutantes is one of only a few turkeys on this top-notch, 100+ song compendium of sixties sounds. There's no reason to comment on the packaging, 'cause it's as nifty as one would expect. Especially valuable are the track-by-track liner notes by Mike Stax. Bounce your rent check this month and buy this instead.

(Last minute update: I just received the new issue of Mike Stax' *Ugly Things* magazine. This time, there are nearly 200 pages of hi-quality garage and punk coverage. The centerpiece of the mag is a tremendously in-depth interview with Kim Fowley, focusing on his filthy memories of the sixties! For issue #19, send $8, or $15 for overseas airmail, to *Ugly Things*, 3707 Fifth Avenue, #145, San Diego, CA 92103 USA).

Additional advice: Best bet for your jukebox this month is the rarity repro of the '65 jailbait beer-punk anthem, "What A Way To Die" (b/w "Never Thought You'd Leave Me") by the all-girl Pleasure Seekers, with a sleeve that'll make the perfect gift for that dirty old man in your neighborhood. If in some way the Pleasure Seekers are too polished, Norton also offers a three-volume series of pegged-red Northwest raunch 'n' roll from the early sixties, each conveniently titled either "Stomp", "Shout" or "Work It On Out". All



totaled, there are 51 unissued and unpolished cuts included, all of 'em recorded by an unsung master of explosive engineering, Kearney Barton (Sonics, Standells).

Subtitled "Punk from Titan, Downey & Modern", I had the "Scary Business" comp of more "Nuggets From The Golden State" sized-up in advance as a bottom-of-the-barrel yard sale of garage band one-offs on three labels that weren't exactly associated with the sound. Lo and behold, this Big Beat Records import is astonishingly rock solid, raucous 'n' recommended. Most notably, the title track by the Electric Company features the most blood-curdling scream ever waxed, and "Black Roses" by the Brain Train showcases brutal rave-ups to rival the heaviest Yardbirds.

Lastly, the Legends' "White Towers" (Arf Arf) compiles two crammed-to-the-gills CD's of every last note (film, too) of a band that might mean a lot to someone from Harrisburg, PA, but otherwise is only a microscopic footnote in history as the spawning ground for prolific rock 'n' pop writer, Dan Hartman (also of the Edgar Winter Group). The tracks range from primitive '66 live rehearsals to mid-sixties cover material galore (including a proficiency for Kinksongs minus a bit of the unbridled energy of the originals) to '69/70 power trio performances (at their best, like "Deception", nearly as powerful as Nazz, but at other times kinda hard to get excited about, at least to my ears).

HELP WANTED: There are some obvious holes in my home jukebox setup. For this issue's column, I will limit my plea to a trio of desperately needed discs. So, please do not hesitate to let me know if you care to part with either an Epic Records copy of Jeff Beck's "Hi Ho Silver Lining"/"Beck's Bolero" (for the flip), Love's "Stephanie Knows Who" (on Elektra), or "Burned" by Buffalo Springfield (Atco; as with Love, its flipside totally escapes my increasing senility). Drop me a line at: 408 Vernon Terrace, Raleigh, NC 27609.

Here are some crappy, pointlessly short reviews I bashed-out 'n' sent to Bale for the last issue of *Hit List*, but he took exception to the fact that they didn't conform to his iron-clad four-sentence maximum (so that the world can be further subjected to the most ill-conceived record review section ever - why does he feel that it's necessary to review 200-300 records every issue, since he'd be the first to admit that many of 'em aren't worth a damn? Why not devote more space to reviewing the good stuff?). Not only didn't he end up running 'em last issue, but he didn't even bother to tell me until long after that issue had departed for the printer. This guy is a real charmer. He eventually informed me - with one of his typically insulting emails!

MONKEES - "Music Box" CD

For evidence of the contagious creative influence of the Beatles circa 1967, look no further than the inexplicable artistic triumph of the "prefab four," the Monkees. While the first two albums of pre-arranged backing tracks and outside songwriting sold best, within half a year the band had usurped the business machine behind their success, hiring their own producer and also hijacking session duties and songs. From this second period, there's the expected Davy Jones eunuch teen fodder, but also some first-rate pop-psych ("Daily Nightly", "Tapioca Tundra", "Porpoise Song") and country-rock (the latter exclusively from Mike Nesmith). The magic evaporated as quickly as it arrived, as is documented throughout the final disc of this four-CD set. Nevertheless, this is the best box set in a while.
(Rhino/10635 Santa Monica Blvd/Los Angeles, CA 90025)

DEEP PURPLE - "In Concert" CD

Am I the only one whom Bale feels compelled to warn at deadline, "No Uriah Heep reviews"? Hey, I remember Heep, which is exactly what they were. But Deep Purple, that's another matter entirely (see my "Juke Box Jury" column in *HL* Volume 2, Issue 3). True, there's a lot of crud in their catalog, but then there's this "In Concert" reissue of a few BBC radio broadcasts from back in the day. I haven't even gotten to the '72 disc. That's 'cause the '70 half of this 2-CD ear-splitter screams for repeat action. "Child In Time" as always worth an avoid, but dig "Speed King", "Wring That Neck" (one of Ritchie Blackmore's best ever blasts here), and the equally boffo "Mandrake Root". Average song running time, 15 minutes!
(Spitfire Records, no address)

BLUE THINGS - CD

OK, I had some involvement in this reissue but still wish to spread the word about the co-tops (along with the Byrds) on my all-time folk-rock hit parade. It's hard to name a band less likely for "garage punk" labeling, but that's just how they've been lumped over the years. Truth be told, the Blue Things were seasoned performers who had learned firsthand from the same pool of influences as the Beatles (Buddy Holly, the Everly Brothers, etc.). What sets their recordings apart from the Sunset Strip variety of folk-rock is the melancholy twang of vocalist Val Stecklein, his all too infrequent efforts at writing original material (uniformly unforgettable), and a band sound built around a remarkably versatile guitarist, Mike Chapman. Besides the folk-based material, the Blue Things also delved into punky proto-psychedelia, captured here as bonus material.
(Rewind Music, no address)

KINKS - "BBC Sessions 1964-1977" CD

With the savage riffarama collectively remembered as their early hits, the Kinks were true progenitors of punk. Not surprisingly, the sonic force of those first Shel Talmy-produced 45's seems slightly muted here, as the band occasionally seems a bit stiff when revisiting this material under the watchful eye of engineers at BBC radio (nearly every British act of that era suffered from the same unsympathetic BBC squareness, which is explained fully in the liner notes). Although it happened only rarely throughout their long career, little brother Dave Davies steals the spotlight herein with several inspired performances, including an outrageously energetic "Love Me 'Til The Sun Shines".
(Sanctuary Records, no address)

ALICE COOPER - "Billion Dollar Babies, Deluxe Edition" CD

Alice Cooper (the band) might have shocked a lot of people and sold a pile of albums during their heyday, but besides the theatrics their legacy is chiefly as a great singles band. After all, the one truly solid long player was '74's "Greatest Hits". It's standard to see earlier albums like "Love It To Death" and "Killer" cited as "classics", something which said much less often of later LPs like "Billion Dollar Babies". In truth, they all suffered from the inclusion of long stage pieces, not to mention Bob Ezrin's kitchen sink production. "$BDB" is, in that regard, one of the worst offenders. Yet for trashy fun this works, as it mixes minor league material (which still moves, like "Raped And Freezin'") alongside bona fide classics ("Elected", "No More Mr. Nice Guy") and a bonus disc of vintage live AC. Hats off to Rhino for recreating the ridiculous '73 packaging!
(Rhino/10635 Santa Monica Blvd/Los Angeles, CA 90025) +

Jeff Jarema
Here 'Tis Magazine

Supagroup Is:

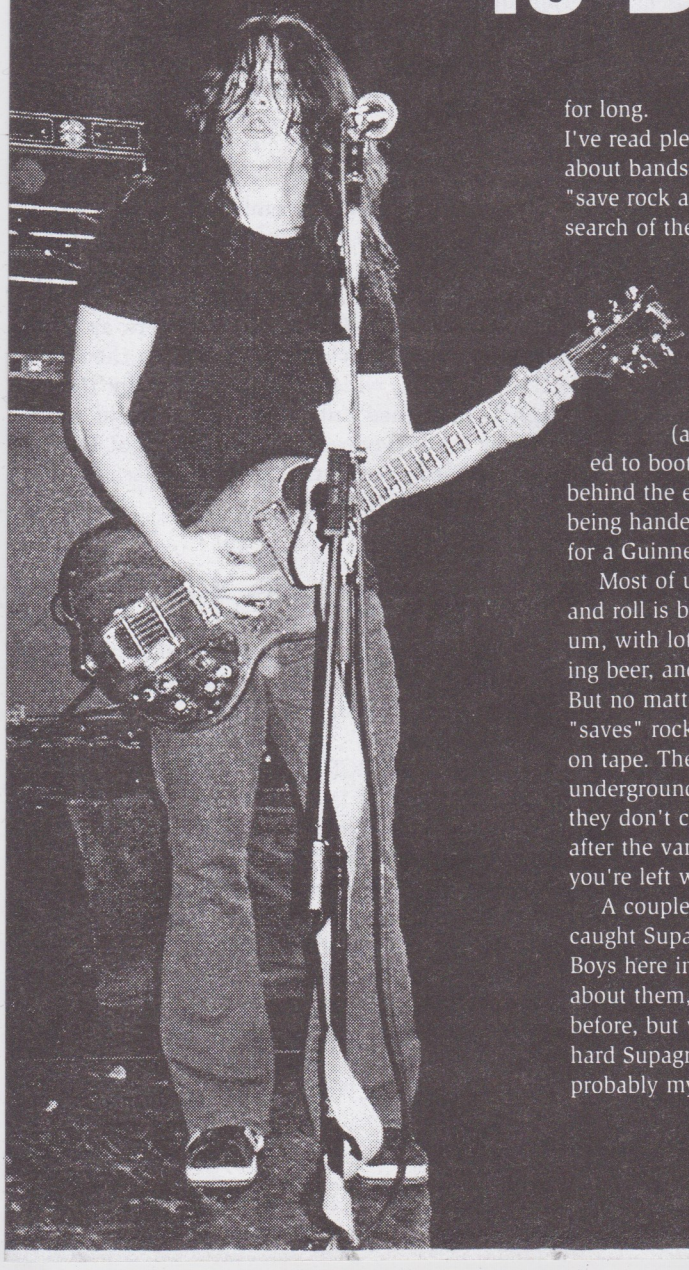
Chris Lee: rhythm guitar, lead vocals
Benji Lee: lead guitar, backup vocals
Mark Brill: drums
Leif Swfit: bass

supagroup Is Better Than

By Alexandra Zorn

One night, back in '77 or so, Rock-and-Roll stopped by CBGBs to catch a Ramones set and knocked up a barmaid in a toilet stall. The love child of that clandestine union now walks the earth, and it is known as SUPAGROUP.

You may want to laugh at the name. And if you ever hear them, or pick up a copy of their album, "We Came To Rock You," you might want to laugh at their song titles and their lyrics. Go ahead, they don't mind. But I can promise you this, you won't be laughing for long.



I've read plenty of articles and interviews about bands that are supposedly going to "save rock and roll." I've eagerly gone out in search of these bands — gone to their shows, downloaded their mp3s, bought their 7"s. Some of them are pretty damned good, but too many of them are mediocre musicians with limited songwriting ability (and they're usually poorly recorded to boot), hiding their meager gifts behind the enticing veil of ROCK; it's like being handed a Bud Lite when you're dying for a Guinness.

Most of us can probably agree that rock and roll is best experienced in the live medium, with lots of sweaty bodies, freely flowing beer, and the bass rearranging your guts. But no matter what you say, the band that "saves" rock and roll is gonna sound good on tape. The problem with most of the underground rock bands around now is that they don't come through when it counts, after the van pulls onto the highway and all you're left with is a cold slab o' wax.

A couple of months back, I randomly caught Supagroup opening up for the Toilet Boys here in NYC. I didn't know anything about them, had never even heard of them before, but within five minutes I was a die-hard Supagroupie. Waxing hyperbolic is probably my worst vice, but believe me when I say that Supagroup is everything a rock band should be. They've got chops, hooks, a pair of supacute brothers on guitars, a southpaw basher on drums (who plays cymbals better than most drummers play their whole kit), and a thumping bassist who wears a really tough-looking cowboy hat. And, as if that weren't enough, they managed to produce a live album which sounds better than a lot of $100,000 studio records I've heard.

When I found out they were coming back to NYC I waged an endless harassment campaign until they finally consented to talk to me. After I softened them up with some Indian food, we sat down to talk about the rock and roll phenomenon that is Supagroup:

A: What is the Supagroup manifesto? What are you guys all about?

Chris: Next!
Benji: bleeeeeeep [kind of like a "Family Feud" rejection sound]

A: You can't do that for every question!

B: Miller High Life. Pocket pussies. Rock.
C: with a "W"!

A: and a "K"!

B: No No no
C: Shut up. This is where we get in a fist fight.

A: Over how to spell "rawk"?

B: It's happened before.

A: My god.

C: That's pretty much it. We have fun. We like to drink, we like to rock and roll.

A: So I read that *Flagpole* feature about you guys, and at one point you said: "There's been a lack of fun and good times in rock and roll. People are tired of being so introspective all the time, and they want to go back to the most primal of instincts. So, basically, it's all about fucking."

C: That's what I said?

A: According to the article, you (Chris) said that. Are you on a mission to take the irony out of rock?

Your Favorite Band

C: I don't think there's a lot of irony in what we do. There's nothing extraneous — we don't even use pedals. We just plug in, play and we rock.
B: What you see is what you get.
C: We're kind of getting real tired — I think a lot of people are getting real tired — of what everybody else is doing, of what's on the radio these days. I can't listen to pop radio anymore, and I used to love it.
B: Man, totally, back when Bush was big. Hey, do you remember that band, the Nixons?
C: I remember when No Doubt was huge. That was awesome.
B: They've really changed.

A: You know, everybody says rock is dead, or that it's dying. You're a rock band, you play with other rock bands, what do you think?

B: It's dead.

A: So you guys are the "carcass of rock" band?

B: Nah, we wanna save rock and roll.
C: That's not true [that rock is dead]! Every place we've been, even if we've never been there before, there's some kid that comes up to us and says "We wanna rock like you! We've got this band called Corpse Bike or Fuck Face..." or whatever, and they're kids — like 18 or 20, so it's encouraging.
B: I think it's growing, on an underground level.
C: I think all of a sudden, the kind of rock-rev-and-roll that we do is now the punk rock, the underground scene. It's kind of a weird place for it to be, but it's fun for us.
Mark: It's not healthy, rock and roll isn't healthy, but it isn't dead.

A: It's in remission.

B: Shit ain't dead.
C: Blink 182 is playing arenas, and the Supersuckers are playing clubs. It should be the opposite.

A: Do you think all these underground rock bands can bring rock back to health?

B: No! Only Supagroup can!
C: I don't know. I don't think there are any bands out there that have a radio single. I don't think commercial radio is going to pick up this scene until they can't ignore it anymore. Like Metallica. They weren't on the radio until their fourth album.

A: If you ever did play an arena show, if you had a buttload of money and could do whatever you wanted, would your show look more like Van Halen's (with David Lee Roth) or Aerosmith's?

M: Aerosmith.
B: More like Zeppelin. We'd just have lights.

A: Just lights?

B: Just lights and lots of boobies in the crowd.

A: So you want us to pay $50 to just watch some lights?

B: Yes.
C: I think we'd have some explosions.
B: There might be a couple explosions. Our whole thing is that it is what it is. Just rock. You're either into the music and you're into what we're doing, or you're not.
C: I don't think our tickets would be $50 either — more like $18.50

A: That's reasonable. I'd pay that for some lights.

B: There's lots of bands you can go see with a big show. You can go see Britney Spears and enjoy the show.
C: Fucking A, I'll bet Ricky Martin's got tons, I bet he's got more pyro than Kiss.
B: And tight ass pants.
C: Yeaaaaah, that guy's one hot Latina!

A: The Toilet Boys have a lot of shit going on on stage.

B: That's another reason we're not too into it — there's a lot of bands doing what we're doing, not to dis the Toilet Boys or any band that uses pyro, but a lot of these little rock bands use a lot of pyro.

A: So you don't have to do it?

B: Right.
C: We would kill ourselves.
M: I don't think we're coherent enough.
C: If we had to make our own fireworks, like those bands, we'd have no fingers.
B: We'd kill ourselves in the van.
M: You don't need all that shit. You don't need that — we saw AC/DC, they didn't have all that shit. Did you ever see that "Live From Paris" video?

A: No

M: From 1980? One of the last shows Bon Scott ever did?

A: No.

M: Something that we watch religiously?

A: NO.

M: It's great. There's nothing going on in that video, and it's my favorite video ever. It's just five guys rocking.

A: Better than the Danzig home video?

B: We saw Danzig's house in L.A.

A: With the big pile of bricks in the front yard?

B: Yeah.

A: You guys actually get compared to AC/DC a lot — the sound, the brothers, the energy on stage. Do you mind being compared with them all the time?

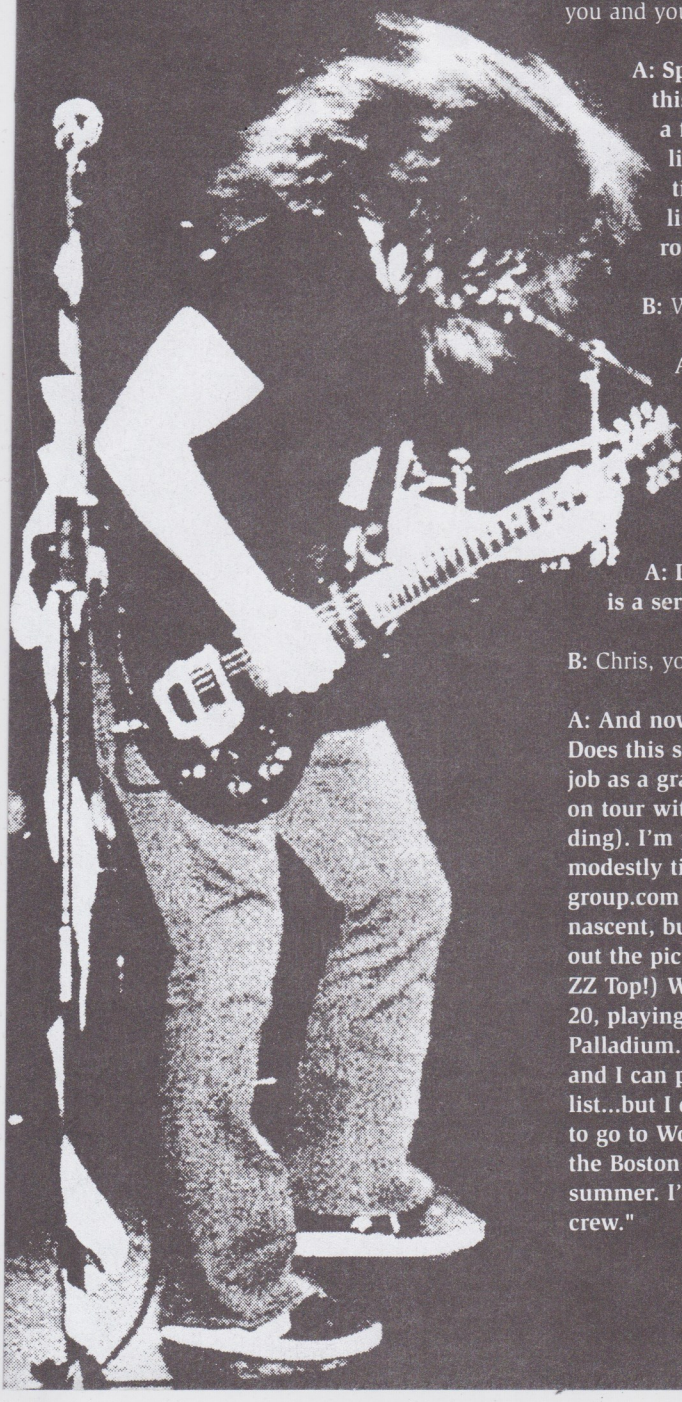
C: Actually, we've been getting a lot more Aerosmith comparisons. I think it has to do with his [Benji's] hair. Jimmy Page he gets lately, because of the hair. We're always being compared to big '70s rock bands, which I think is kinda cool.
B: Well, that's what we listen to.
C: But we've never been compared to Van Halen.

A: Yeah, well, you don't really remind me of Van Halen — you look more like the Ramones. But if you're talking about arena rock shows, they had a pretty good one.

B: We've never been compared to Rainbow.
C: Blue Öyster Cult I get a lot.

A: Oh yeah. Really????

C: [laughs] No, I'm just shitting.
B: We get a lot of Pat Benatar.
C: People say that I primp like Paul Stanley.
B: Man, all this time I've spent nurturing you and your diva fucking bullshit.



A: Speaking of diva bullshit... I saw this show on VH1 called "20 to 1" a few weeks back, and they were listing the Top 20 guitarists of all time. Benji, you weren't on the list. Are network heads gonna roll?

B: Where? Show me the way.

A: I think it's on 5th Avenue somewhere.

C: Let's go to the Viacom building right now and storm their offices.

A: Did you fire your publicist? This is a serious oversight!

B: Chris, you are not staying on top of shit!

A: And now, for a totally random question. Does this sound familiar? "I'm quitting my job as a graphic designer in order to go out on tour with a rock and roll band (not kidding). I'm playing drums with a band modestly titled Supagroup; go to supagroup.com for info. (The site is still quite nascent, but being updated often - check out the picture of us with Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top!) We will be in Worcester on May 20, playing with Armored Saint (!) at the Palladium. Email me here before May 12 and I can probably get you on the guest list...but I can understand if no one wants to go to Worcester. We'll be headed up to the Boston area again before the end of the summer. I'd love to see some of the old crew."

M: You got that from the website!

A: Yeah, so did you like high school?

M: I hated high school.

A: So why did you invite everybody to be on the guest list?

M: Cuz that's what I want them to see — what the hell I'm doing now. Look, all the people I went to high school with would leave that show in about 5 minutes. And that's what I want out of it.

A: I thought that was funny, that that's what I found when I searched the net for Supagroup. So you guys toured with Armored Saint, huh? And now you're on the road with Nashville Pussy. How's that going?

M: Great! Fantastic!
C: They couldn't be nicer. They've totally taken care of us.

A: How many dates are you playing?

L: I think a total of a little over 3 weeks. We're about to enter our last week.
C: They keep saying "we're gonna have to take you guys on a 'real' tour" because things have been a little hectic on this one, for sure.

A: Aren't tours supposed to be hectic?

L: Well, they're [Nashville Pussy] usually a much more well-oiled machine.
C: They lost their publicist, without knowing it, and they changed management in the middle of the tour. I think they were a little bit disappointed. We were supposed to go out with them until Thanksgiving, but we had to cancel the last couple of weeks, because they're going out with Insane Clown Posse.

A: Oh my god!

C: As much as I don't think that would be very cool, they're going to be in front of a lot of kids.

A: That's true, that's true. So how long have you guys actually been out on the road?

B: We've been touring pretty consistently since February. Before that we did two years in the south, four days at a time, long weekends. Finally we started getting enough of a

crowd in the South to be *worth* something, and we started coming up here.

A: So who did you hook up with first?

C: Supersuckers.
B: They took us out first.
C: That's where we met Zeke, Fu Manchu.
B: Armored Saint took us out. Wow, that was one hell of a tour (sarcastic laughter).
C: We got a booking agent this summer. We've been working consistently, but now we're getting guarantees. Which makes a big difference.

A: What's your best show been?

M: Austin. The last time at Emo's, that was kickin'.
Leif: Although that private party at SXSW was pretty wild.
C: One of my favorites in recent memory was here in NYC at Continental. With Syrup and the Toilet Boys.

A: That was a great show. Even though I like them, I thought you were much better than the Toilet Boys.

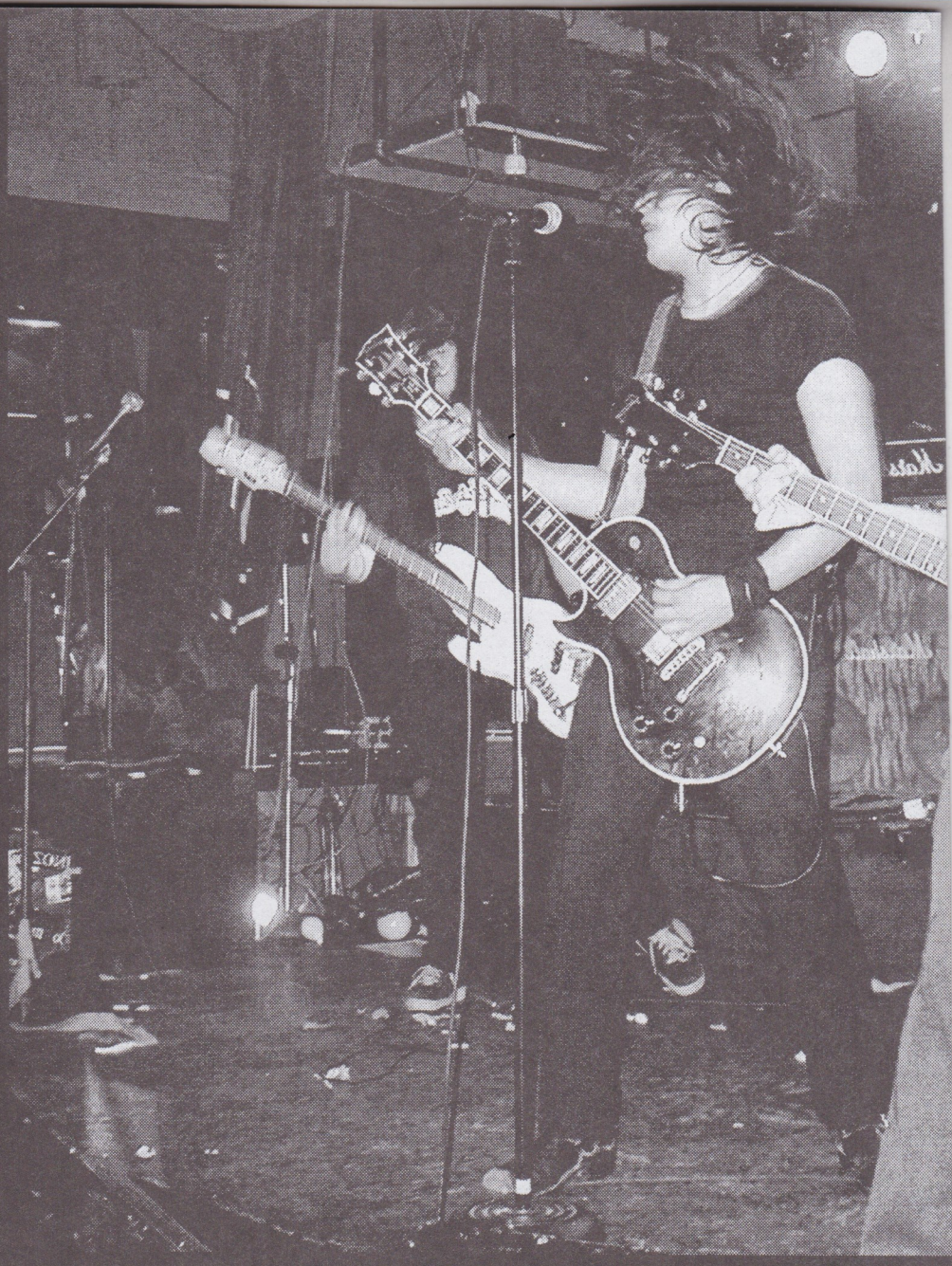
B: Say that again.

A: You were much better than the Toilet Boys.

B: Well, I didn't think so, but whatever! [laughs]
C: I have a funny story about that Emo's show. There's an Emo's in Houston and one in Austin. It's been around forever and, like Benji said, we've been touring around the South for forever. When we tried to book a show at Emo's in Austin, the guy who was booking there — this was two years ago, maybe more — was like "oh, you're the guys that sing about rock and roll, and getting laid, and getting drunk, huh?" And Benji says yeah, and the booker says "we don't have that kind of crap here!" I think it's an emo-core kind of place.

A: Hence the name "Emo's."

C: [laughs] I don't know, I don't know. Whatever. He didn't like us cuz we weren't serious, or we didn't have enough emotional content. It's a bunch of bullshit. Anyway, we're there two years later with a packed house, and the guy who used to book the club is in the band — I swear to God — opening for us. We had a broken string, or some kind of equipment problem during our set, so I ask the crowd if they want to hear a



"We're always being compared to big '70s rock bands, which I think is kinda cool."

story, and they're like "Heli, yeah! Tell us a story about rock!" So I say, "I'll tell you a story about rock and roll. Two years ago my brother tried to book us in this place," and then I tell them the story I just told you, "and here we are; he's opening for us, it's two years later, it's a packed house and we're still singing about rock and roll, drinking and pussy!" The crowd went wild. That guy was such an asshole.

A: In all of the reviews of "We Came To Rock You" [their self-released live album, recorded at The Mermaid in New Orleans] everyone talks about the titles a lot: "Rock and Roll Tried to Ruin My Life," "We Came to Rock You" and "Rock and Roll Star." Aren't they kinda missing the point?

C: I think the rock and roll grabs people's attention. Our last record, when we were more of a punk rock trio, was called "Planet Rock."

A: I was gonna ask you about that. Where the hell's my copy?

C: I don't know. It's very emo.

A: You've got a totally emo "Planet Rock"?

C: There was a point when we just decided to write about what we know.
B: The music is the only thing that really matters. Song titles are just titles. There's only three things we can really sing about anyways: sex, drinking, and rock and roll. And people always latch onto the rock and roll stuff, cuz it's in the title, but the other songs are about sex and beer and no one ever latches on to that!
M: They're missing the point!
B: There's *three* things involved here. It's a trinity!

A: You're only getting a third of it!

C: Sure, rocking's great, but the drinking and drugging — come on, don't be so shallow!

A: Was "Jailbait" inspired by Motörhead?

C: No, but we're well versed in Motörhead. We knew what we were getting into.

A: I thought it was going to be a cover — boy, was I surprised.

M: There's also an Aerosmith song "Jailbait."
B: And Thin Lizzy.
M: No, that's "Jailbreak."
C: I thought that's what we were singing!
B: Ixne on the Ailbreakjay.

A: Wow, you even speak Pig Latin. You're multi-talented. So, who writes the songs?

B: I write them all.

A: All of them?
[Chris gives Benji the finger.]

B: Chris and I do.
C: Benji, look up.
B: You shut up, and then your mom ate it up.

A: Damn, you beat me to my next question. Does working with brothers cut down on the "your mom" jokes? [laughs]

C: Not at all.
B: I think it increases it!

A: Is it hard working with your brother?

B: He's an asshole.
C: I'm sick of his diva bullshit! Actually, I think it makes a lot of things easier. But when there are conflicts, there are 20 plus years of history to draw from.

A: You can dredge up some really old shit, like "You stole my skateboard."

C: You stepped on my toothbrush when you were two years old.
B: You totally lugied in my mouth when I was 6. I remember that. Fuckhole. Don't talk to me about history!

A: Did he really? That's ill.

B: Yes!
C: It was an accident!
B: Oh, it was an accident: you were holding me down, wrenching my mouth open, and lugieing in it. What an accident!

A: That is gnarly. What a '70s rock word. So, Chris, do you wash your sweatbands between shows, or do you just have an extra supply.

C: They're very stinky.

A: I'm sure. Do you throw them out into the crowd for the adoring Supagroupies?

C: They're actually just strips of ripped up t-shirts. I have a couple that I rotate.

A: They give you that kind of Jimmy Connors crossed with Scott Baio look.

B: Chris is in charge, of me! [sung to the tune of "Charles in Charge"]
C: I've never heard that one before. What was the name of that guy in the Partridge Family?
[the group debates for a minute]
M: David Cassidy
C: David Cassidy. That's the worst comparison I've ever gotten, before that one.

A: What was it like growing up in Anchorage?

C: It was cold.
B: Dark. Very introspective.
C: Dark, depressing. I left at 17 and he [Benji] left the day after he graduated high school, if that's any indication.

A: Is there a music scene there? Did bands come through there.

B: Somewhat, a small town music scene.
C: Yeah, if they got big enough. Punk bands did. And rappers. And big metal bands, like Metallica.

A: Would you ever play there?

C: Yeah, I would play there now if somebody would fly us up there! Hell, yeah. But I wouldn't want to stay there. And only in summer. It's a shithole.
B: Hey, that's your home. What are you, too good for your home?

A: Are you really just a bunch of sensitive guys masquerading as a bunch of macho marauders?

B: Shit! A little bit.
C: Yeah. A little bit.

A: Do you make girly hand gestures? Do you really want to be an an emo band, but just think you're gonna make more money doing the rock?

B: Actually, we really want to be a dance trio.
C: Nah, we want to be a pop band. I want to be Ricky Martin.

A: I suppose you could be if you really wanted to.

C: We have fun. That's the thing — I've never been in a band that had more fun. If that means we're sensitive, well, so be it.

A: You have fun, even though you're in the

"The music is the only thing that really matters. There's only three things we can really sing about anyways: sex, drinking, and rock and roll."

van all the time?

C: We're all pretty good at shutting up.

A: You just keep to yourselves?

C: We do a lot of reading, bring lots of books.

A: Do you listen to music in the van? What do you listen to, aside from your own stuff?

C: We don't listen to our own stuff.

A: I'm sure

B: Stax. We listen to a lot of Stax stuff. Dictators, Ramones, Little Richard and Booker T, Chuck Berry. Aerosmith, Thin Lizzy. We have a lot of discs in the car.

A: You guys listen to any of the old Jamaican rocksteady?

C: Not as much as we should. We get sick of whatever we bring.

A: It's hard not to.

C: We've been trying to bring an eclectic





mix. I brought Spacehog, the new Stone Temple Pilots, which is actually very good.
B: ZZ Top. Cheap Trick. All the old '70s rock rev and roll bands. And the Pixies.

A: You guys listen to metal at all?

All in unison: Metallica.
C: Pantera a little bit. A hint of Slayer.

A: It must be hard to write new material on the road — has that been a problem for you guys?

C: Yeah, I mean, we haven't made a record in so long, we have 35 songs ready to record. I've actually been trying to put the breaks on. We have a new song we've been playing on the road called "What You see Is What You Get." It doesn't have lyrics, I just make them up as I go along.
B: We also have another new one called "Delicious Dick and the Testicles."
C: You mean "Benji Sucks Dick", that one?
B: Oh yeah, I remember it. Good god, shut up.
C: You wrote it!

A: I know, he writes all the songs, right?

B: Well I saw you sucking dick and that's how I wrote it. It's in the first person, but you're singing it.

A: I've heard people describe your live album as muddy and not a very good recording, but they must be smoking crack or something because it's probably one of the better live recordings I've heard. The mix is good, the production's good, especially for live, you can hear the instruments really clearly.

C: It's the best my vocals have ever been recorded. You can hear everything — like that there are 14 people in the crowd. Including the mistakes. Maybe that's what they're talking about.

A: Well, everybody makes mistakes. In the studio you can edit those out.

M: It's a warm recording. Recorded to 16 track 1/2 inch tape.

A: So it's analog?

M: Yeah.

A: Cool, what kind of set up do they have at the Mermaid?

M: They had mics on all the instruments, but the key is they have this one central mic in the middle of the room. The room isn't that big. It's a little muddy — we weren't planning on making an album, we just wanted to record it to hear how it sounded, and then Benji spruced it up a bit, made it punchy. I think it sounds really good.

A: Yeah, I think it sounds great. I listen to it everyday.

M: Awright!
B: People tell us it's muddy and I ask them, "are you gonna cry, you little bitch? You think the quality isn't clear, you fucking pig?"

A: You seem to have some anger issues.

B: No, I just like to act out.

A: So do you have a fan club? Can anybody be a Supagroupie, or is that reserved for the green room attendants.

B: You just have to buy the shirt.
C: We don't really have a fan club. The closest thing we have is the guestbook on our website. Which I think is very amusing — recently, this kid was trying to find superheroes online and he wound up at our site. His mom was watching him, and there's boobies on it.

A: Well, it says on the splash page that you have to be 18 to enter.

C: Whatever. This kid writes us "please please, take this website down. You can do better things with your life."

A: It's dirty, find jesus.

C: I haven't seen it since, but I'm sure there's 20 messages telling him to go fuck himself.

A: Awww, come on, he's just a kid.

If you take a look at their guestbook, you see the same sentiment over and over again: "I thought you guys were gonna suck because you have such a ridiculous name, but in the end, you rocked my balls off." Hell, I don't even have balls, and they rocked mine off! Time will only tell if rock and roll can be saved. It's got some pretty brutal opposition: techno, electronica, rap metal, boy bands, music journalists. But I have a gut feeling that 15 years from now, I'll still be listening to "We Came To Rock You." And that's all the salvation I need. ┼

You can contact Supagroup at supagrouprules@hotmail.com

Their website is at www.supagroup.com

DRUNK ON ROCK VOLUME TWO



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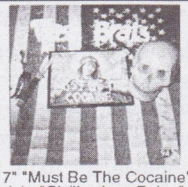
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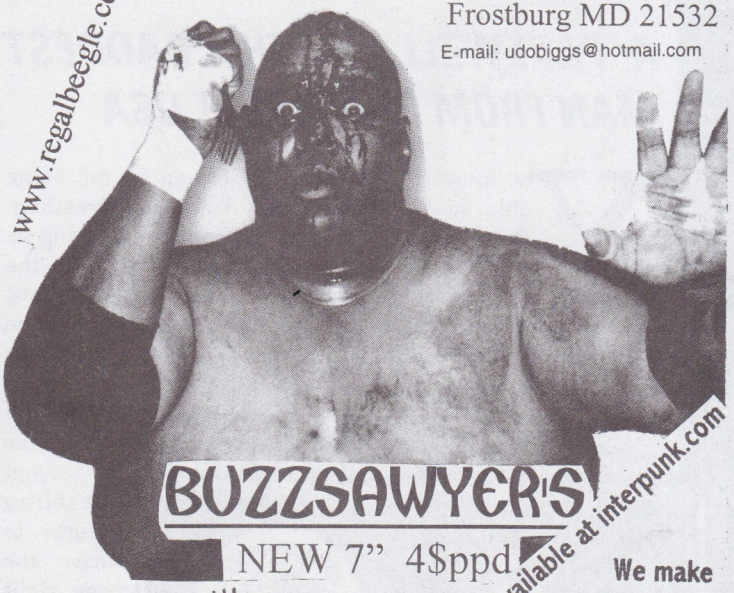
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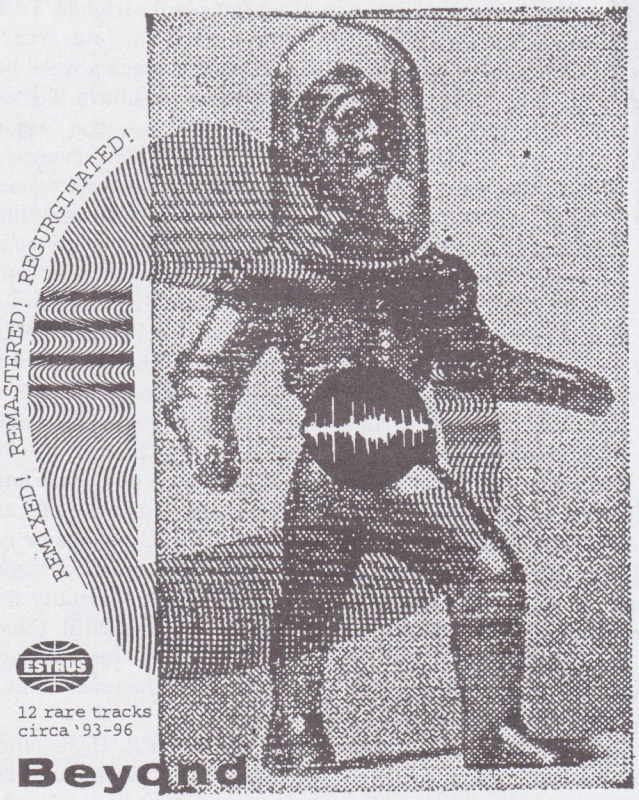
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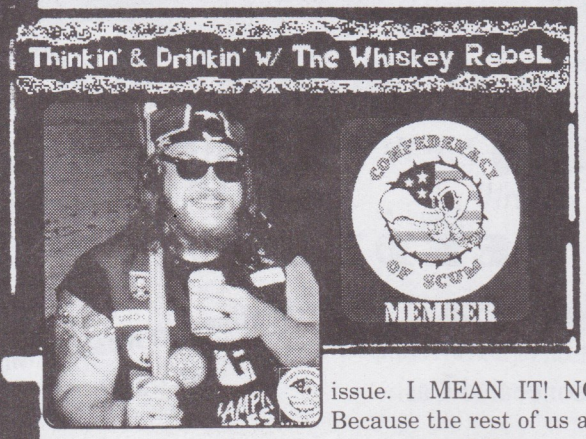
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A FAREWELL TO THE BADDEST MAN FROM BADSTREET USA

You know, I can forgive a German for not being able to understand our American wrestling. Personally, I think their soccer is as boring as shit. On the other hand, if you grew up in the United States (especially in the South) and have remained - by your own choice - ignorant or cynical about the great sport of PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING...well, you can line up and kiss my big ass. Especially if you're a boxing or football fan. I'd like all you wrestling haters to turn the page right now. Skip this issue's column altogether...I'll see ya' next issue. I MEAN IT! NOW! Why?? Because the rest of us are gathered here to remember the greatness of a fallen warrior from the sport we love.



Yes, my remaining wrestling fan reader/friends, I'd like to share a few words and memories about the late, great Terry "bam bam" Gordy, who died of a heart attack a week before I sat down to pen this. Even though we still have Michael P.S. Hayes and Buddy Jack Roberts with us, the loss of the enforcer for the FABULOUS FREEBIRDS behooves us to reflect on what history will remember as the greatest achievement of the 'Birds: they revolutionized both wrestling and rock and roll by being the team that permanently combined the two. I've felt bad for several days since hearing the news, but lately I've gotten my head right and have begun to focus on happy memories of the heyday of FREEBIRD FANTASIA.

Before the Freebirds came along, a few wrestlers took a half-hearted crack at rock and roll. It was a natural reaction to the fact that, as the times were a changin', wrestling audiences were getting younger and more "hip". By the time the 70s had come along, wrestlers were wearing more and more loud, colorful, exotic clothes into the ring. The wrestlers of the 50s and 60s had usually looked like squarehead school P.E. coaches or grizzled old guys who fought in "the big one". Gradually, wrestlers began popping up everywhere who looked like they might actually listen to rock and roll instead of boring music for squares. Still, these guys were the exception rather than the rule. Male pattern baldness victims, such as middle-aged Verne Gagne, ruled the roost in many territories througout the 70s.

In 1979, somewhere in the South, Michael P.S. Hayes and Terry "bam bam" Gordy met and formed a tag team that openly, blatantly, and with great gusto and glee, exuded the rock and roll lifestyle. Long hair, flashy clothes, interviews in which they openly bragged about how they were gonna be "partying" after their upcoming victory. (This wasn't just part of their schtick as wrestlers. If you don't believe me, go to Gordy's hometown of Chattanooga and ask the locals!). This team was named in the honor of one of the South's greatest bands, Lynyrd Skynyrd. The mouthpiece for the tag team was Michael. Once their band got started, he was also the lead singer.

Terry Gordy was by far the bigger and more intimidating of the two. He had one of the biggest barrel chests in the business and was also quite tall. He rarely smiled. (Smiles SUCK!! Frowns RULE!!) He usually looked pissed off as hell, like he was maybe just born mean. Somebody you definitely didn't want to mess with. The FREEBIRDS rapidly won tag team straps every time they hit a new region. As their team name and lifestyle would suggest, they didn't stay in one place overly long.

Finally, in 1981, they arrived in Atlanta, Georgia - the home of the first ever coast-to-coast cable TV wrestling show ("Georgia Championship Wrestling") on the WTBS Superstation. They brought with them a third partner with loads of experience and a similar hedonistic rock and roll lifestyle, "Buddy Jack Roberts". This was the *very* beginning of the age of nationwide audiences for wrestlers. The Freebirds were revolutionizing the sport by declaring themselves to be the first 3-man tag team in wrestling history.

Here's what the Freebirds had to say to interviewer Gordon Solie on national TV in their maiden appearance on the Superstation:

Gordon: "With me now are the FABULOUS FREEBIRDS, a new dimension in tag team competition in professional wrestling today. Their spokesman is Mr. Michael Hayes". (the opening chords of the Skynyrd song "Freebird" can be heard playing in the background)

Michael: "That's right..don't forget..FABULOUS FREEBIRDS! Ladies and gentlemen, you have seen all kinds of great tag teams come through your area, and you have always seen TWO men comprise the tag team. But before your eyes you see THREE.. (sure enough..the other two 'Birds were standing tall behind Michael. Terry was wearing a big ten gallon cowboy hat)

Gordon: "You mean, all THREE of you??"

Michael: "That's right. That means you never know...you can never plan your strategy to a "T". It may be Buddy and I wrestling. It may be Terry and I. It may be Terry and Buddy, you just never know. So you always got to be on your toes, 'cause you understand WE are the hot childs of the city. They DO run wild and I DO look pretty, baby. MMMMmmmmmmm. Get a close-up on that face, Gordon! Ha ha ha.

Gordon:"I wonder...uuhh....if you'd mind introducing these men".

Michael: "One at a time. Behind me is my Big Brother. The main man, the stud. 270 pounds of rompin', stompin' walkin' talkin' GRAVEYARD DESTRUCTION. He is the true, the only original master of disaster. He is not a drugstore cowboy, he is not an urban cowboy. He is a SPACE cowboy.

And beside him, one of our partners...and our main man. The man that came in when we needed a helping hand. He is 230 pounds of sizzling stuff, and baby, he don't STOP till he gets ENOUGH. This is our partner Buddy.

And last but not least, where women would like to feast. ME!! 240 pounds of twisted steel and sex appeal, so doggone BAD you think I'm unreal. And let me tell you something, I got prettier hair than Farrah Fawcett, more moves than John Travolta. I'm sexier than Marilyn Monroe thought she could be. And though this may sound pretty and it may sound sweet, it goes from the top of our heads to the bottom of our feet. And the main thing you got to keep in your mind is this: that we are the GREATEST, the NEWEST, the

YOUNGEST, and the LATEST. We are coming down to Georgia, and when we come to your city we'll get down with our nitty gritty. We've broken attendance records everywhere. We've drawn more than Bob Seger's ever thought about. Heart, the Commodores, more people have seen US. We broke the New Orleans Superdome attendance record, baby. So, I wanna say this closing remark, Gordon Solie. Everybody out there, you say whatever you wanna say and do whatever you feel you must. But when the result ends up, ANOTHER ONE bites the dust."

Gordon: "The FABULOUS FREEBIRDS.."

A lot of us who were into punk rock at the time were blown away by the brazen cockiness of the Freebirds. They influenced A LOT of bands. ANTISEEN and HELLSTOMPER, to name only two. And how about my pals from COCKNOOSE?? Years ago, they recorded the Freebirds' "Bad Street USA". In fact, I have a major public announcement to make here. I am hereby revealing the main inspiration for my "Whiskey Rebel" persona publicly. I saw Bam Bam and Buddy Jack make a big entrance wearing Confederate flags on the back of vests. It looked so fucking cool that I went out and bought a rebel flag and a rebel flag bandana and began wearing them onstage at shows by my band, ALCOHOLICS UNANIMOUS. Besides looking flashy, it was also an appropriate way to salute the great distillers of the South.

Not long after the FREEBIRDS conquered the N.W.A., they strutted their way through the W.W.F., the W.C.C.W. down in Texas, and even the A.W.A., which covered parts of the West coast and the Midwest. It wasn't long, of course, before other tag teams and singles wrestlers came along who lived a rock and roll lifestyle. Nowdays every wrestler everywhere has an entrance theme, and 90% of the time it's rock and roll. You can trace all this directly back to the immortal FABULOUS FREEBIRDS.

WHISKEYREBEL

In more recent years Gordy, along with his partner "Dr. Death" Steve Williams, dominated tag team wrestling in Japan until they got tired of stomping the sushi-eatin' competition over there. He made guest appearances for E.C.W. and W.W.F. (under a mask), and lived the Freebird lifestyle everywhere he went. At the time of his death, he still had plenty of wrestling bookings. He was in great demand. I hear that Gordy's wrestler son and his brother Michael P.S. Hayes will be appearing in his place at one of the cards he was booked for. Terry Gordy was only 40 years old. I'm glad I got to see him wrestle live. I already drank a 21-shot salute to him. I suggest you do the same if you haven't already.

I was merrily checking out all the internet "hits" to "whiskey rebel" the other night. Much to my disgust I found a website review of an old issue of *Hit List* that refers to me as a "not-so-subtle bigot". An accusation of sexism was also made. Since they were so casual about labeling me as a bigot and a sexist, why didn't they accuse me of being homophobic while they were at it?

I've been called all these things before by other knee-jerk idiots who haven't done their homework. In most cases they name a particular statement or passage of mine that they are upset by. Not only was the writer of this latest review not named, but absolutely NO DETAILS were offered about how he or she came to such an assinine conclusion.

I guess I have no choice other than to assume that whoever slandered me in such a way MUST BE a card-carrying communist, a pedophile, and undoubtedly a chronic nosepicker. Yep, the fucking pinprick who slandered my name is probably hoping that thee



HIT SQUAD

Whiskey Rebel will put his website on the map by damning it in print. If I commanded my army of "Whiskey Rebel-Roo's" to leave obscene email on the site, it would undoubtedly mean that the dusty counter at the bottom of the page would start spinning like an empty chew can in a hurricane. Instead, I suggest that all you Rebel-roo's go check out the websites of your favorite supermarket tabloid weekly. They've been telling similar lies a lot longer, and are a helluva lot more entertaining.

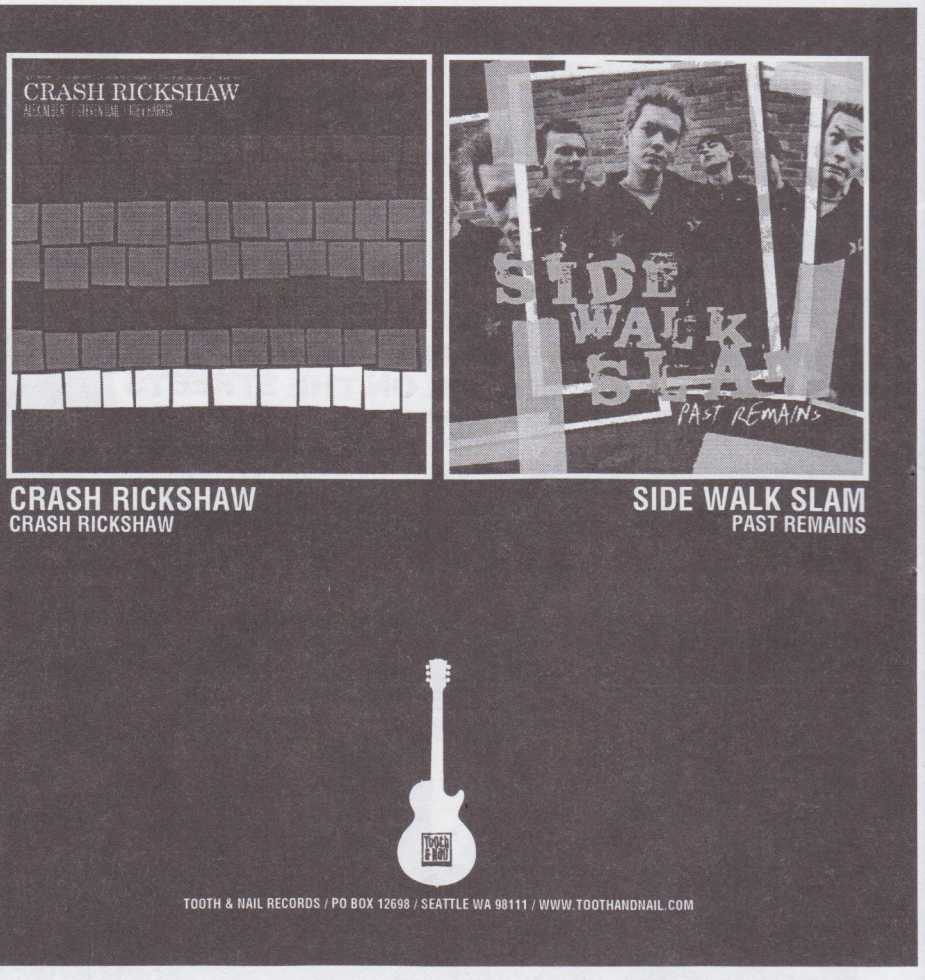
I know that some of you hate traditional country music. But, it's obvious that a growing number of you are into it. Whenever I write about it either here or in my website diary (http://home.conectiv.net/~whskyreb/index.html), I am always amazed about how much email I get. I downright hate 99% of "contemporary" country. Highbrow Emmylou Harris-type civilized country is OK sometimes, but what I'm REALLY into is honkytonkin', outhouse-tippin', adultery-exploitation song lovin', redneck-friendly country music. Drinking songs, truckdriving songs. Yeeahhh!

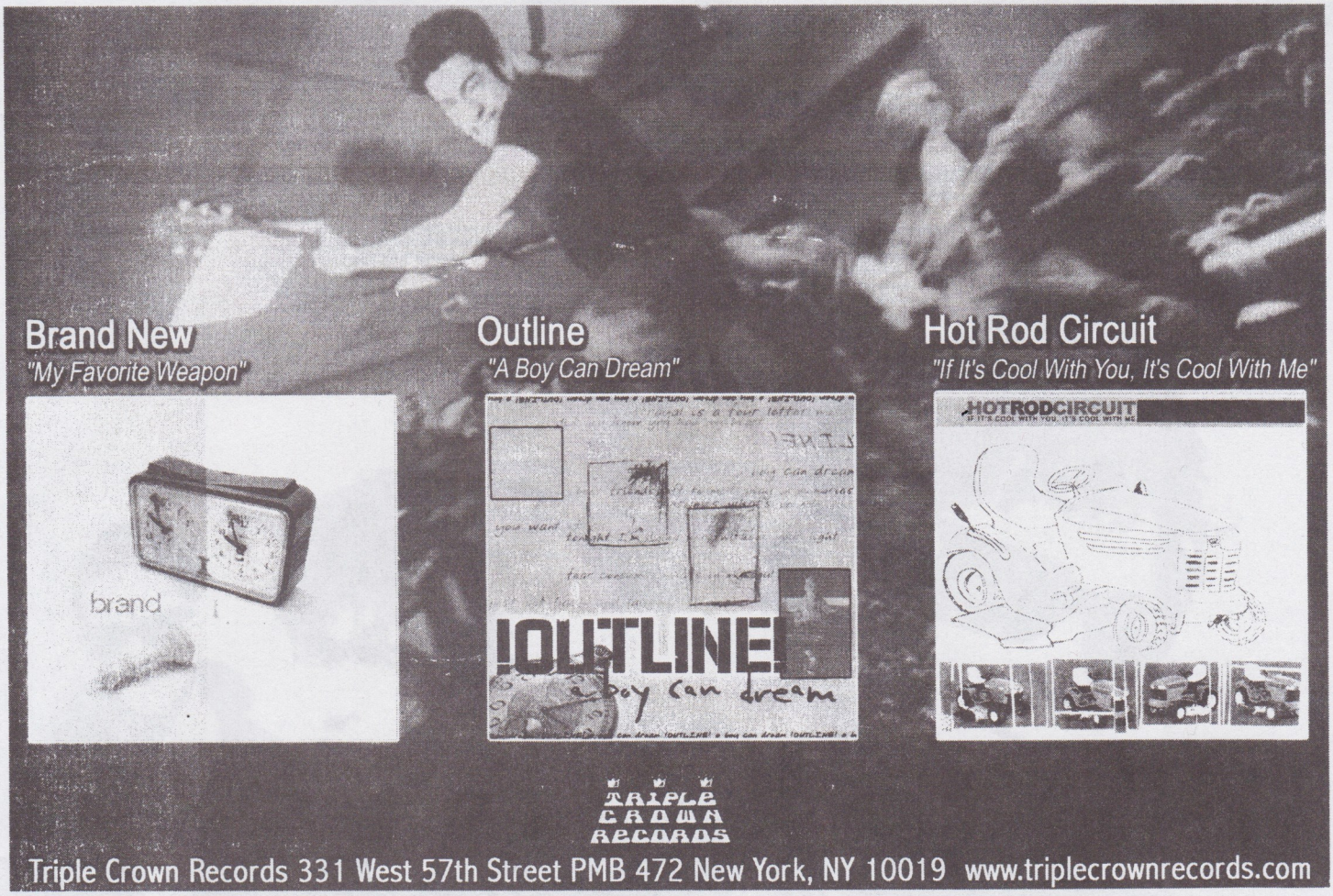
My kid Elvis and I sat down to try to pick out our twenty favorite country songs. We started off by drinking a good deal of beer. Then, I drank a few shots of whiskey. As always prepared, Elvis kept notes while I alphabetically made my way through my country albums. When we got to our favorite singers, we'd agree on a few of their songs as a starting point . (We KNEW ahead of time that Hank Williams would place a few...c'mon). After we got to "Z" we went through a ton of compilation LP's, looking for tunes we'd missed. We wound up with 87 song nominations. After some more beer and shots and a lot of debate, here's what we came up with.

In no particular order: FARON YOUNG "Live Fast Love Hard Die Young". JIM ED BROWN "Pop-a-Top". JOHNNY RUSSELL "Redneck National Anthem". WEBB PIERCE "Wondering". GRANDPA JONES "Old Rattler". STONEWALL JACKSON "Waterloo" (we especially enjoy Stonewall's line about Napoleon losing his pants). LORETTA LYNN "Don't Come Home a Drinkin' with Lovin' on your Mind" (that's one of the best song titles ever!). The WILLIS BROTHERS "Give Me 40 Acres". HANK THOMPSON "Sixpack to Go" (you can hear me croon that one on our last Alcoholics Unanimous CD...plug plug.). JOHNNY CASH "Ring of Fire" and "Folsom Prison Blues". WAYNE HANCOCK "Highway 54" (by far the youngest singer on this list, and the hottest act going today in my book). PATSY CLINE "Walkin' After Midnight" (which is overplayed a bit on jukeboxes, but hell, it's a GREAT song). JIMMIE RODGERS "T.B. Blues" (he knew he was dying of tuberculosis when he recorded this one. The lyric's chillingly go on about the graveyard and having dirt shoveled in your face...amazing!). ERNEST TUBB "Waltz Across Texas" (it became one of his most requested tunes but oddly it wasn't a big hit, unlike many he scored). PORTER WAGONER "The Rubber Room" (spooky sounds...very orignal). JIM REEVES "He'll Have to Go" (a classic adultery tune). WAYLON JENNINGS "Ruby" (more adultery, YES!). HANK WILLIAMS, JR. "All My Rowdy Friends have Settled Down". DAVID ALLAN COE "If that Ain't Country" (this is the song I'd most like to force-feed to "alternative" country types). DAVE DUDLEY "Truckdrivin' Son of a Gun". RED SOVINE "Teddy Bear" (a tearjerker about a CB radio-loving crippled boy whose trucker Dad has recently passed away). MERLE HAGGARD "Mama Tried". JOHNNY PAYCHECK "Take this Job and Shove It" (a realistic workingman's anthem written by David Allan Coe) and "Pardon Me, I've Got Someone to Kill" (the FINAL WORD on adultery songs. The ULTIMATE). GEORGE JONES "White Lightning" (written by the Big Bopper, who died in the same plane as Buddy Holly) and "If Drinking Don't Kill Me" (one of the lines is: "with the blood from my body I could start my own still", a tale about becoming a human alcoholic sponge. George lived this one out). Finally the King of 'em all, HANK WILLIAMS Sr. "Ramblin' Man" (not to be confused with the Allman Brothers' tune. A haunting song about having the urge to just up and leave at times rather than settling down like "normal" folks). Also by Hank is "Long Gone Lonesome Blues" (Hank actually yodels in the 1st verse, when his suicide attempt fails: "I jumped in the river/But the dog gone river was dry") Finally, there is Hank's "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry".

It was hard as hell for us to narrow it down to thirty. Remember, we set out to name the twenty best. We simply weren't able to cut out ten more. It's all grist for the mill., since musical taste is only a matter of opinion. So go ahead and email me your list, if you feel like it. ⊕

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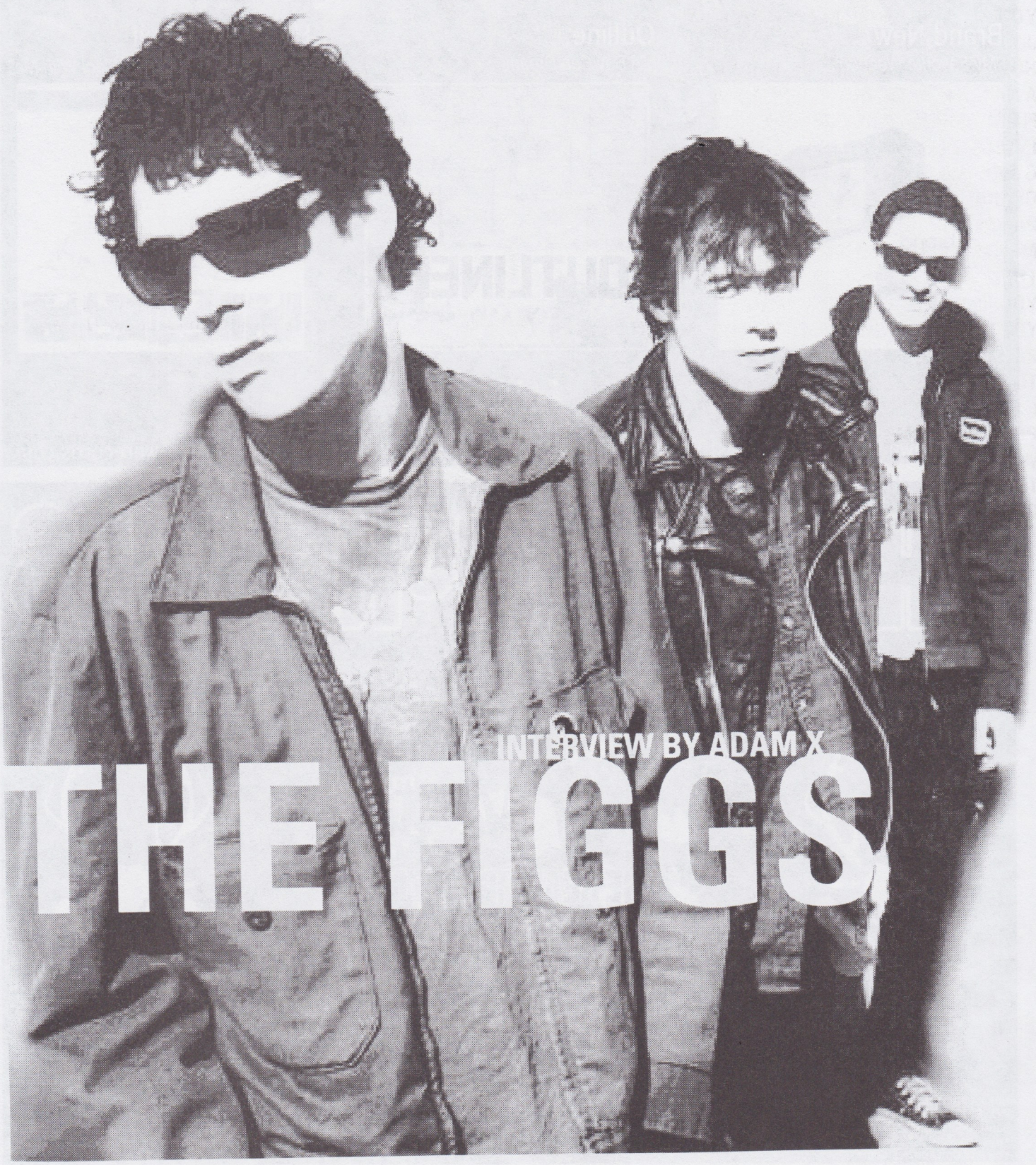
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HONEST DON'S



INTERVIEW BY ADAM X

THE FIGGS

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF A BAND THAT'S BEEN AROUND OVER A DECADE, TOURED AND RELEASED FIVE ALBUMS OF PROLIFIC ROCK SONGWRITING, AND STILL REMAINS AS GENUINE AND TRUE AS THE SPARK THAT IGNITED THEM? YOU'RE ABOUT TO READ ABOUT JUST SUCH A BAND. I CAN'T COUNT HOW MANY FRIENDS I'VE BLOWN AWAY BY BRINGING THEM TO A FIGGS SHOW. THEY'VE GOT THE INTEGRITY OF COSTELLO, THE ENERGY OF THE JAM, AND THE SMARTS OF JOE JACKSON, ALL THE WHILE PICKING IT UP WHERE REPLACEMENTS LEFT OFF. YOU CAN FIND THEIR CDS ANYWHERE, BUT IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THEM USED, YOU'D BETTER HURRY. WITH THE RELEASE OF "SUCKING IN STEREO" THE BOYS ARE BACK ON TOUR, AND I HEAR THEY'RE ON A BUY BACK PROGRAM. I EAGERLY CAUGHT UP WITH THE THREE-PIECE BEFORE THEIR SAN FRANCISCO GIG AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HILL.

Meet the FIGGS:
G = Mike Gent (guitar/vox)
D = Pete Donnely (bass/vox)
H = Pete Hayes (drums/vox on "the Bounce")

X: How long have you all been together now?

G: 14 years.
H: I joined 12 yrs ago.
D: Yeah, he's the new guy.

X: Has it always been "the FIGGS"?

G: No, first it was the SONIC UNDERTONES,
D: We've also played under some other names like the DISTRACTED HOUSEWIVES. Wait, I don't think I want that in print. There were a lot of other bad names like the FIGGS, but for whatever reason we stuck with that one.

X: Was there a common goal right away, musically speaking?

D: No.
G: Not at that time. It was just something to do together.
H: There were always a lot of little goals. Like, OK, we want to play this place, and OK, now we want to play out of town. You know, little baby steps.
D: At our first club gig we thought we were gonna make around $500 just because we were playing "clubs." Then we got paid $50, so our goals changed quickly to making records.
G: Once we started playing gigs that were farther and farther away, then our goal shifted to getting a van and touring. We never really went looking for a major label deal, but...
D: The goal was to do whatever it took to stay together and create the opportunity to make records. One goal that we have achieved is being able to deal with each other long enough to stay together. We're lucky to have gotten through all that shit and bickering early on.
G: We were together almost seven years before the Imago record, "Low-Fi in High Society."

X: Back then, what was the most common inspiration? Was it just the fix of keeping it going?

D: There weren't any other bands from Albany, NY, so we were influenced by independent rock bands like Replacements and the rest of the Twin Tone groups.

X: Bands without a lot of schtick and gimmick?

G: Hey, we've got a schtick! We have a good time.
D: We're into the entertainment aspect of being a live band, instead of just having the songs carry it alone. I think that this all came about in the last few years.
G: Yeah, there's definitely a bit of schtick involved, including a lot of ass shakin'. But that's just rock'n'roll. Just ask Pete Townsend.
D: Right now there are a lot of totally balls-out rockin' bands around with "the feel," but they don't really have the songs.

X: How does your songwriting happen? I've noticed that Pete (drummer) has been contributing more with each album.

D: We were looking for a couple of additional songs on our latest "Sucking in Stereo" CD, and Pete is always really helpful in finishing songs. He's the literary one. He obviously penned "The Bounce" all on his own.
G: A real literary classic! As the years have gone by, we've become much more open to suggestions with our songs. They're not our precious little babies anymore. You have to begin trusting and respecting your bandmates' opinions.
D: Your song isn't "you." It's just something you produce, and you don't always see what's wrong with it.

X: Did anyone attempt to change your songs when you did the "BandaMacho" album on Capitol?

G: Those were all pretty old songs that we did for Imago, and just as we were finishing that record Imago lost their distribution. Basically, we only recorded "Hey Mr. Moon Man" and "FTMU" for Capitol. We had been playing songs like "Kiss of Baby" and "Every Night" since '89. I don't know why, really, because we had a lot of new songs at the time. We recorded 23 songs for that record, but only 17 made the cut.

X: Just for the record, do the three of you agree on your favorite FIGGS release?

H: I, I like 'em all. At the time I think each

one we record is our best ever.
G: "Ready, Steady, Stoned" is our best record.
D: The latest, "Sucking in Stereo," is the easiest for me to listen to. It usually takes me a long time to be able to listen to our albums comfortably.
H: My favorite single recorded piece we did is a 7" split with this band BLOOM.

X: What are some of the common reoccurring influences people hear in your music?

D: The British ones are totally apparent, and they're very real influences. We're also totally into older American bands as well.
H: Someone threw BADFINGER at me the other day.
G: A lot of the British references came from what Imago publicity had put out there.
D: That, and us playing with Graham Parker. (The FIGGS were Parker's backing band for his "Last Rock n Roll" tour and live CD) I think a lot of those Jam/Costello/Who/Joe Jackson influences showed up on the earlier CDs, whereas "Sucking in Stereo" is more rock'n'roll than power pop.
G: "Wrong Chord", from the new CD, is based on the vocal melody for "Born in the USA." Accidentally, of course.



X: Do you still hear from Graham Parker?

D: Sure. I just played bass on his last record.

X: Have you ever had any interest in having someone else play on your records?

H: We had a bunch of friends play on our last record.
D: Do you wanna play on our next album, Adam? If you're there, you're on it. Sometimes it's hard to have a good time in the studio because you're not performing, so we like to get more of a performance vibe. Any friends who are around are always welcome to play with the FIGGS. We are so far from being the "pretentious nuclear band." Mike has a side band, the GENTLEMEN, and I'm always playing and producing music in one way or another.

X: What's the biggest disappointment for you about current music?

G: I dunno. I haven't bought a new album since the early '90s. I realized something about my dad the other day, because he also used to buy a lot of records. But he stopped buying records when he was around my age. I like the latest FLAMING LIPS and WEEN records.
H: I've been trying to go out and see more bands in New York now. I really like this band called ONEIDA.
G: I love the UPPER CRUST.
D: I like a Rhode Island band called STRINGBUILDER a lot. So much so that I produced their album.
G: I just discovered "Electric" by the CULT. I didn't give it a fair shake in its day because I wasn't a fan of their "Love" album. It's cool to hear something so fresh.

X: Alright, classic-wise, what's your favorite album this week?

G: "Time Fades Away" by NEIL YOUNG
D: "Scraps" by NRBQ. I've also rediscovered the GRATEFUL DEAD, much to the chagrin of our fans.
H: You should see what the song "Ripple" does to people when you put it on at a party. Ha, ha, ha!

EVERYWHERE WE GO, THERE'S SOMEONE WHO SAYS, "MAN, I HAVE BEEN WAITING 10 YEARS TO SEE YOU!" IT HAPPENS EVERYWHERE. OUR FANS ARE REALLY FANS. THERE'S NO HIP FACTOR INVOLVED.

X: After touring for eight years now, where is the ROCK? Has it changed?

D: The Rocky Mountain Range is always slow. You have to play show after show after show there to get a strong following.
G: Down south we have real good shows. Our tours now are so much better than when we were on a major. When the Capitol phase was over, you'd have thought we'd have given up touring, but instead we chose to tour more.
D: The only real way to do it was to take control of everything to see if we could do it on our own, instead of relying on a label to back us up.
G: It's great that even though we've been around for so long, there are still lots of people who haven't yet seen or heard us. They're always excited when they think they've found something new, and you feed off that. The turnover rate of A&R industry people makes it easy for us to gain some interest whenever we play at CMJ or SXSW. They're always coming up and saying things like, "Who are you? Do you have a label or anything?"

X: Do you have a favorite town to play?

H: Probably New York.
D: Yeah, New York and Boston are always solid.
H: Here! Every time we play San Fran it gets better.
G: Seattle, Green Bay!
H: No interview is complete without the two words Green - Bay.
G: Athens, Georgia has really picked up over the last two years, whereas D.C. seems to have fallen apart. The last time we played Detroit was fantastic.
D: Everywhere we go, there's someone who says, "Man, I have been waiting 10 years to see you!" It happens everywhere. Our fans are really fans. There's no hip factor involved.
H: We've even been having trouble finding our CDs in the used bins now.
D: Honestly, it's hard for us to get copies of our old releases, so we've been trying to buy them used and sell them at gigs.

X: Well, I know I've been waiting to see you since the last time I saw you a year ago. Any parting thoughts?

G: Not now, it's time to rock.



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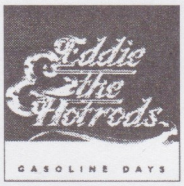
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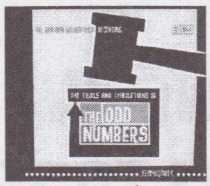
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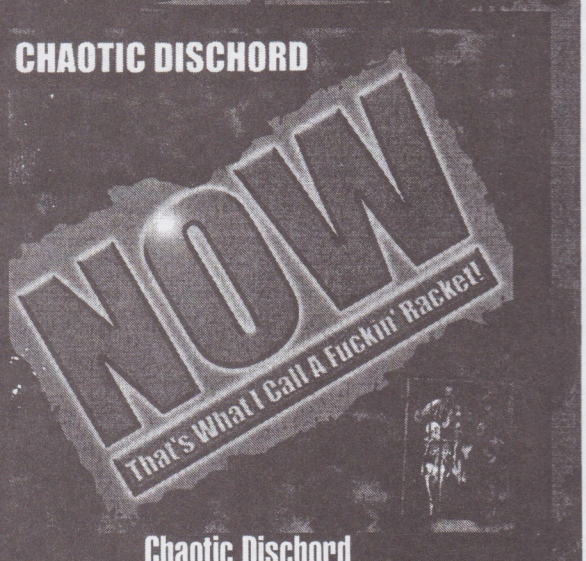
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HAVING A CAREER IN THE MUSIC BIZ IS LIKE SHOVING BROKEN SHARDS OF GLASS UP MY ASS WHILE SINGING SHOWTUNES: ANOTHER SOMEWHAT TRUE ACCOUNT OF LIFE IN A PUNK'N'ROLL BAND.



So there we were, waiting to go onstage on a typical Friday night, at a rock club somewhere on the East Coast of America. The place is full of leather pants, dyed hair, and smoke, and yet no one says or does anything remotely interesting. The opening band is on and I sit through their rehashed streetpunk crap, song after song about tits and beer and unity, until I stop listening and begin studying the band members' nostrils and earholes because those are much more interesting than the music. If there was ONE individualist statement being made here, ANYTHING that set this band apart from the thousands of wannabe toughguy punk bands in this shit-eating world, I'd be thrilled. But what this band is great at is fitting in, not standing out. There are no catchy songs, no interesting lyrical twists, no danger or wild abandon. They're just like everyone else. They are the status quo, and The Kids love it. The band covers a Social Distortion song and does it ten times faster than its intended tempo. OOOOHH, innovation! My very bowels quiver! They make in -between song announcements like: "This one's about my fuckin' fucked up life...cuz my fuckin' life is pretty fuckin' fucked up, man." Fuckity Fuckity Fuck!", I say to myself, this time studying the guitarists' sausage-like fingers as he slaps at his Les Paul as if it were a fine Canned Ham with strings.

They finally finish their 14-song set of pure wonder and bliss, and it's time for us to play. I pick up my guitar and head for the stage. The opening band is slowly taking down their equipment. "You guys were pretty good," my guitarist says to their guitarist. Their guitarist just snorts through his nose and walks away. I realize that our reputation has preceded us and start to think that tonight might be fun after all. There are tons of leather-panted Trash Rock types here, and they all stand in the front row with arms folded, waiting for us to suck like their email buddies said we would. We proceed to play sloppily and have shitloads of fun, while posing with our guitars like Freddy Mercury's gayer brother.

Halfway through our second song, a full cup of beer goes sailing past my head. There is a middle-aged couple dancing in the middle of a bunch of Thunders lookalikes. The guy is about 45, wearing a nice business suit. He has graying, feathered back hair. It's a style which I'm sure makes him feel rebellious at the office. His wife is forty-ish, blonde, well dressed. They are both very, very drunk. They are dancing so enthusiastically that they're messing up the perfect Ron Wood meets Stiv Bators haircuts of some of the audience members. They are ordering cups of beer between songs, I notice, only to hurl them at us once we start to play. They are shouting so loud at us between songs that I can hardly even hear myself talk to the crowd.

"WHOOOO!" Says Business Boy.

"WHHOOOOO!" Says Business Boy's wife.

"This songs fuckin' about my fuckin' life, cuz fuck, man, my life is really..." I start to say.

"WHOOOOOO!" Says Business Boy and his wife.

This disconcerts me so much that as we start the next song, I turn quickly and bang right into my bassplayer, who I used to describe as having the physique of a gay wrestler. It hurts. I soldier on and we finish the set.

"You want me to fuck your wife while you watch, and you're only going to give me thirty-five bucks?"

As we pack up our crap I can see the usual post-rock show thing happening. It's the same everywhere. The other bands are somewhere making fun of us, bitching that we play cheap guitars and our amps suck and we can't play. There are guys desperately trying to hook up with girls and girls desperately pretending to be bored, thereby exciting the guys to even more idiotic displays of studied faux-Brando machismo. The bartender is raking in the dough and the jukebox is on. Everybody is acting out their sad little routine. The usual crap. I want to be drunk, but I only drink alone. So I'm looking forward to the hotel room and its many free pillows and towels, and the chance to call my girl. The eyeliner is clumped on my eyes so stiffly that I can barely blink. I can smell myself, and I don't like it. My ears ring. I look for the rest of my band, who have all scattered.

I finally find my guitarist talking to Business Boy and Wife of Business Boy. They are glancing furtively around the club, the three of them, and I stop in my tracks and wonder what's going on. A drug deal? Are they buying Boy Scout Cookies from him? Is Wifey getting hairstyle tips? The three of them disappear into the dress-

ing room area, which is really just a room with a sink and a mirror. There are band stickers literally covering every inch of the walls and ceiling. Sensing intrigue and tasting the hairspray and pomade dripping from my sweaty brow, I follow them, on tippy toes, like Nancy Drew. I position myself around the corner and kneel down so I can hear but not see them. I notice a New Wave Frankenhooker sticker on the wall, and I give it the finger.

"I dunno about this," my guitarist says. He sounds nervous, which is utterly unlike him. He's usually got more sac than a barn full of drunken gay Santa Clauses. "Ohhhh, baby, come onnnn" says Business Boys' Wife. "We can have fun!" She is drunk and really laying it on thick. Business Boy jumps in like he's negotiating for a new car.

"Listen man, be cool. Theres' Thirty-five bucks in it for you..."

"Thirty-five bucks?," says my guitarist. "You want me to fuck your wife while you watch, and you're only going to give me thirty-five bucks?" He storms out of the room, whooshing past without seeing me, as I stand up and quickly walk away, giggling. As I depart, I hear Business Boy say "We should have asked that other band, you know, that kid with the fuckin' fucked up life."

"Shut Up, Wallace," says Business Boy's Wife.

When the weekend is over and the gigs are played, we return home to Boston. The latest issue of *Punkpoop* is in my mailbox. In it there's an interview with us in which we dis the Boston scenesters, calling them a cliquish bunch of quasi-racist suburbanites who were into Matchbox Twenty two years ago. Most of this is true, and some of it is just our usual suave highbrow wit. I grin as I read it, and wait for the shit to hit the fan. Two days later, it does. A guitarist who had once been in our band is at a punk show and is cornered by two members of a local band called the Sticky Pins and three skinhead kids. They flex their muscles, grunt, and grab their crotches, convincingly conveying the message that the band that dissed Boston must die! "But I'm not even in the BAND anymore," our ex-guitarist whines. "They kicked me out! I hate them, too! Hey, let's go get a slice of Pizza, eh, fellows?" Meanwhile, my bassist is having problems. He had moved to Philadelphia with his girl, and had been commuting via Greyhound Bus to Boston for rehearsals. I knew this was hard on him, but really felt that he was as dedicated as I was to being in an obscure and perfectly imperfect rock'n'roll band and that he would stick with us. Soon, I get an email from him that shocks me. "I have to leave the band," he says, "because my ass really hurts from the long busrides. I have sores. It sucks."

Never in the history of rock and roll has there ever been a more original reason for leaving a band. "Tell your ass I'm sorry," I emailed back, "and I hope everything heals up and stuff." I really loved that kid, and was really sorry about his ass, but what would we do now? There we were again, me and my long-suffering drummer, left with half a band, half a six pack, and half a script of Paxil, which wasn't helping. "Even GG Allin and Leif Garret, who are my personal Gods, won't save us now," my drummer wailed. A few days later I'm at my shit job, waiting for the freight elevator when I see a young kid staring at me around the corner. I stare back and he quickly walks away. I think nothing of it, until I notice that almost everytime I turn around, this kid is there. I notice he looks a little like Glen Matlock. I begin to wonder.

One day my boss asks "are you in some band or something?" while we're unloading huge boxes of frozen chickenguts from a truck.

"Yeah," I tell him, wondering what the hell was coming next. "Some kid that works here says you're in his all-time favorite band," says my boss, looking at me like I had six heads and five huge black penises coming out of my pants.

"Oh," I say, and return to unloading the chickenguts.

The same day, as I was getting ready to wash the turkey juice off of my shoes and go home, I suddenly smelled the strong scent of...Weed. Pot. Maryjane. I turn around, and there's that kid again.

"Your band is my favorite band!" He says, standing there looking like Glen Matlock and smelling like Peter Tosh. "I've got all your records. Great, great shit!"

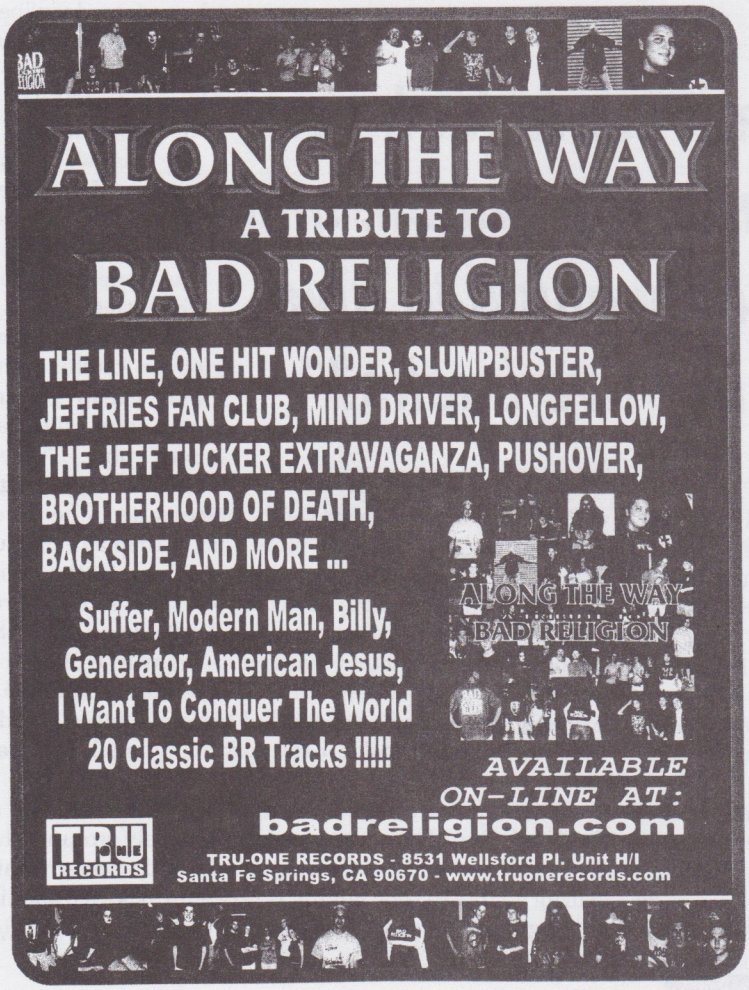
"Hey, thanx." I say.

"But why don't you guys play out more," he asks.

"It's complicated, dude. The Biz sucks. We do what we can. Plus we're looking for a bassplayer right now."

"I'll play bass for you guys! I know I don't look all glam and gay and shit, but I know all your songs, man!"

I stood there, smelling the ganja and thinking about all the people who'd been in our band. This kid standing in front of me suddenly seemed to have been sent by divine providence. He told me how his friends and he used



to defend us against all the people they knew who thought we sucked or that we were homosexual Nazis.

I found out that he loved the same things that we held dear: Mott the Hoople, the Stones, Big Star, the Replacements, Jack and Coke, foreign beer, horror flicks, the Manic Street Preachers, Teenage Head, Stiv Bators' solo album, the Gun Club, the Psychedelic Furs, Waylon Jennings...almost a perfect fit. As soon as he joined we began initiating him into the band by humiliating him in every conceivable way. We named him Mutton Ass, and expressed, loudly and repeatedly, our amazement that his ass was cut from such a fine chunk of mutton. He took it well. We never saw his tears. So we had our new bassist, he was thoroughly humiliated, and the band would continue on by dumb luck only, as usual. Once again we had been handed the keys to continued existence, whether we deserved it or not.

Again I wondered how we kept this band going, when the things we stood for were so outdated in this age of "all convenience, no ideals" punk rock. I wondered why I was so adamant about our lyrics really saying something, when I knew that spouting punk clichés would help us more in terms of popularity. I wondered why we made sure our interviews were always painfully honest and gave the kids something to think about, when I knew that what The Kids really wanted to hear these days was "cool tour stories." I wondered why we thought so much about our record covers and imagery, when the bands that got big were the ones that just stuck a naked chick or a picture of striking union workers on their record sleeve and sold tons of records. It seemed to me that the biggest, dumbest, and richest kids were the most popular in High School, and so too was this the key to success in Punk Rock. It seems it's all about being big, dumb, and rich these days. Nice amps, new guitars, touring budgets, and nothing to say at all.
The recipe for fame and fortune.

FAKE LETTER FROM HIT LIST READER:

"Dear Chaz Hole:

All you ever do is talk yourself up and whine about the state of Punk Rock. Stop complaining about more successful bands, you're just jealous. No one owes you anything. You're lazy and you reek of fresh fish. You just want to promote your gay band. Please stop writing columns and quit music for good!"

REPLY TO FAKE LETTER FROM READER:

I'm not promoting my band here. I never even mention our name. I print the web address, but that's a soft sell. As for being jealous of bigger bands, I guess maybe sometimes I am, but only when I've been drinking heavily. My Daddy taught me to be honest, and there sure is a lot of bullshit in Punk these days. I have not elected myself the guy that carries the "truth torch" for Punk Rock, but I call 'em like I see 'em. Doesn't it seem to you that the least challenging bands get the biggest these days? Perhaps we need to remember that Punk Rock by definition is rock'n'roll music in it's rawest form, packaged with challenging ideas. Where are the challenging ideas these days? In fact, ARE there any ideas at all? Forget that I'm in a band, I want a better punk scene because I'm a FAN of punk rock. I don't expect to be "successful" - I'm not even sure I know what that is! I just want a better punk scene because my record collection deserves better punk records!

Also, certain people in this biz often take themselves a bit seriously. Who is to say I shouldn't poke a little fun? I make fun of myself and my friends in these columns too. I write about what I know, which is life in an obscure, struggling punk band. It's the only thing I'm qualified to write about! I give you the inside dirt, baby! The dirt you must have, the dirt you really need, deep inside. So there you go, tinsel tits!

I can still be reached at: Chazhalo@elvispresley.com
The websites are still: www.angelfire.com/punk/haloes
www.peladorecords.com

(DISCLAIMER [of sorts]: This column is intended by the author to be a work of humor, more or less. There is no malicious intent. This column is a portrayal of incidents in the lives of one obscure punk rock'n'roll band. Please do not beat up or karate chop the author. Please do not give the author a wedgie. Please do not pop a cap in the ass of the author. He means well, but is ten cents short of bus fare. Thank You.) ⊕

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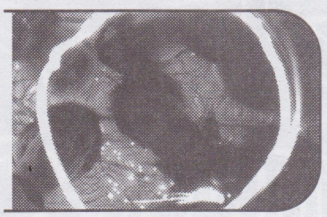


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SNAKE OIL SUPERCHARM:

: MARK MANNING ON ZODIAC MINDWARP
: BY THE SLEAZEGRINDER

"WE WERE ALL NEURON FRIED BEYOND ANYTHING THAT HAD STUMBLED, SHELL SHOCKED BACK FROM THE SOMME, VIETNAM, OR ARNHEIM. SOMEWHERE DOWN THE SLIDING POLE OF MENTAL ILLNESS I'D BOUGHT A SMALL WHITE MOUSE, MOUSELLINI WE CALLED IT, SO I GUESS WE MUST HAVE BEEN IN ITALY. I WAS FEELING MORE THAN USUALLY SICK IN THE MORNING. ROBBIE TOLD ME THAT I'D EATEN THE MOUSE ALIVE DURING LAST NIGHT'S ROLLING DEPRAVITY. I HAD NO REASON NOT TO BELIEVE HIM; I EVEN SEEM TO REMEMBER SHITTING SOMETHING UNUSUALLY PAINFUL AND BONY THAT SAME AFTERNOON."
-FROM *CRUCIFY ME AGAIN*



ZODIAC MINDWARP

Where do you think I came up with "Sleazegrinder" in the first place? Like Mark Manning, I found myself in desperate need for an alter-ego, someone to blame the bad shit on. He took seven tabs of acid and weeped as his brains poured out of his ears before the Interstellar cosmic joker Zodiac Mindwarp showed up to save the day and seal Mark Manning's fate, from art student to Rock God in one bad, late 70's trip. I only had to stare at the back of the "Prime Mover" record, mesmerized by the gasahol-fueled beat poetry crammed into the borders. Sleazegrinder might have been Manning's rock-speak for the bass guitar, I don't really remember. To me, it meant I now had free reign to get away with whatever bad craziness was coiled up in my teenage-reptile brain like a King Cobra. Whatever happened next, it simply wasn't me. It was the other guy, the one with the big mouth and the drinking problem.

Although it was hardly Manning's only shining moment, "Prime Mover" remains his most infamous piece of work, and with good reason. A sinister laugh, like the Abominable Dr. Phibes drunk on mad science, kicks off the proceedings. And then there's that riff. Like holy thunder, ripping through the sky and slamming straight into your crotch, a mighty, swaggering thing that defined the

Love Reaction's sound and vision, like the Cult at their most grandiose, only stripped of any neo-romantic soul-warrior posturing, replaced instead with barbaric cruelty and Viking lust, modern day beserkers looking to make necklaces from the ears of the gods themselves. All at once, the Love Reaction raised the bar for just how cool, how menacing, how victorious rock and roll could get. I don't suppose I'll live to see the day that somebody tops the bottled hurricane of "Prime Mover", but since it's 15 years after the fact and I'm still dressed like Zodiac was on the cover of the single, maybe once in a lifetime's enough.

"Give me some space," he drawled like Telly Savalas in "Prime Mover"'s intro, "I want to spread my disease all over the place." Even if he had died somewhere between there and now, as was often predicted by lonely internet feebs, his virus of raunch-for-all über-hipsterism had already set in among the coolest of criminals everywhere. Every time some glory-ripped axe slinger bashes out a riff that's nothin' but muscle, a riff that makes his speaker cabinet tremble and squeal like a bitch; every time some finishing school drop-out of a porn star gushes to a screamy on-screen climax, and the camera lovingly pans up to the twinkling gold crucifix that dangles from her jizz-splattered throat; every time some overwrought adolescent would-be poet scribbles down a line that scares him, because it's actually cosmic, at least to himself; well, that's the mark of the Tattooed Beat Messiah. As his serial killer counterpart was fond of saying, "The Zodiac is with you, always."

An interview with Mark Manning has nothing to do with nostalgia – nostalgia kills, baby, and Zodiac Mindwarp is far from the rock and roll boneyard, although the gutter is always comfortably close. He's just had the common sense lacking in most ego stars to stay under the radar, on purpose. Besides, he's been busy. He has the home life of an American ghetto superstar, after all, with three children from three ex-wives all vying for attention and child support. And then there are the more aesthetic distractions, like drinking and poetry. He's spent months at a time scribbling insane ravings onto rocks to prevent earthquakes, locked himself into obscure English libraries with a bottle of Absinthe, making fast friends with long dead Victorian dandies, perfecting the street thug-turned-Renaissance man vision that has been his life's work. Most recently, he's taken to writing, a speed zone Hunter Thompson in Rimbaud's trousers. Several books have already been published. The auto-biophrenic speed trial of *Crucify Me Again*, the JG Ballard meets Larry Flynt porn savagery of *Get Your Cock Out*, and the soon to be released, tell-all-and-deny-everything story of the Love Reaction, *Fucked By Rock*, among them. And let's not forget the time Z, KLF secret agent Bill Drummond, and Elvis Presley saved the world from Martian attack a few years back. And it's all true, especially the parts that he made up.

With the very real threat of the Love Reaction storming the American shores this Fall for a much-anticipated return to the rock trenches, I figured it was high time to hunt down the elusive Mr. Manning and soak up some of his bad wisdom. It was no easy task. I started by placing a classified in the *NME*, the UK music paper. "Sleazy American rock journalist seeks Zodiac Mindwarp for discussions of a revolutionary nature," I wrote. "Any leads will undoubtedly get you laid." The fuse, as Z would say, was lit. A week later, I got an email from some anonymous Mindwarp fan who graced me with Love Reaction guitarist Cobalt Stargazer's rather obvious e-mail address. After informing Cobalt of my plans, he wrote back, saying simply, "Good news, my friend. We are back. Talk soon."

That was all I heard for a month or two. Then Cobalt wrote back with a phone number, and told me to try it. He didn't bother to tell me whose number it was, however. Through the miracle of a corporate phone account, my girlfriend discovered that it belonged to Hayley, the affable editor at Codex books, Mark Manning's UK publisher. She provided his cell phone number. And so, the circuitous journey ended on a rainy Sunday afternoon. As the minutes ticked away, so did any hope of paying the rent next month. An hour long call to England is financial suicide for a guy that makes $8.50 an hour when he's not at the dog track, or selling fake ecstasy to teenagers, or writing hard bondage stories for *Latex Whore* magazine. But I found myself wanting to just keep the fucking tape rolling. Not because I wanted to soak up Z's bad advice – I mean, I'm 32 years old, I have plenty of my own. No, what was really happening here is one of those super-real moments when you can actually see the psycho-spiritual landscape around you changing, distorting into a new, brighter, braver place. I mean, there was



chance that I was wrong all these years, that rock is merely a distraction, and not some palpable, God-given lifeforce that's dragged me through defeat and victory for three decades.

Any fears were dashed immediately. I was right all along. From across the Atlantic, the great and terrible Mark Manning inhaled deeply from a joint. "So what do you want to talk about?," he asked me with a roguish chuckle. "Rock and roll? I know all about that..."

The first matter to attend to, however, was his Cockney accent. As thick as a fridge-cooled bottle of Karo syrup, my mind was in fifth gear, desperately trying to decipher his words as he graciously asked me how things were going on my side of the pond. I wondered what the hell had happened to the fake American accent he'd displayed in the past, the one he picked up from watching Kojak as a child. "I can do that again, if you really want me to," he laughs, slipping into some sub-Texan cowboy drawl. "Rock and Roll is an American thing, really," he says, returning to his home tongue. "So it sounded stupid when I talked about rock in this voice. It's my speaking voice, though." At this point, I've actually got the hang of it anyway, settling in to the slinky, low-toned groove of his rap. Yank ingenuity.

Although he has many guises, all with different sinister agendas, Mark will always be remembered for his rock star alter ego. I

ask him if he remembers the day Mark Manning became Zodiac Mindwarp. "I think I was 13," he recalls. " I knew what rock and roll was already, and I just decided to become it. Since then, everything I do is rock and roll." All he needed was some co-conspirators. After rounding up a suitable gang of delinquents, the rest was easy. As he wrote in *Crucify Me Again*, " It was another place, another time. I'd given up on the notion of being a crazy drunken poet and settled on just being a crazy drunk instead. I was a lousy poet, but an excellent drunk. An industrious manager named David Balfe thought that the poetry shit wasn't important and figured that I just might be crazy enough to know the way to the fabled Goldmine. He bought me a Fender pick axe, a white one like Jimi Hendrix used to have, and told me to get digging." What he eventually struck, while maybe not gold, was a precious metal indeed.

"Tell the government, the Love Reaction wants the world," the band announced on their first album, "High Priest of Love". As if they were already the biggest band on the planet. "Well, we were," Mark chuckles. "We still are." When the Love Reaction first hit the streets in the mid-80s, they were an overnight sensation. The UK music tabloids had found a new messiah. "Well, we nailed it," Mark explains. "In LA, they were still wearing spandex and hairspray, but rock and roll is criminal. It's crime with a 12-bar beat. That's what we were about. I think the hip-hoppers said the same thing, only without the tunes, really." Mark laughs. "Hip hop is rock and roll without a tune."

"Basically, we were anti-social creatures," he continues, explaining the Love Reaction's origins. "Pissed off that we were surrounded by a world of bullshit. We're supposed to be ashamed of the way we are, ashamed of being scumbags, but I think it's quite good being a scumbag, actually. It's cool to just be who you are." The scumbags brought with them heady messages wrapped in ham-fisted innuendo, like a minister of propaganda spelling things wrong on purpose. "I'm aware that things mean things don't mean things," he says, when discussing the Love Reaction's twisty lyrical bent. "Part of my fun is cryptology and puzzles. I'm a bit of head-fucker. It's how I get my jollies." He chortles like a self-satisfied serial killer. "Head-fucker supreme, that's me."

Then, of course, there was the look. The Love Reaction was the pinnacle of rock and roll fashion, motorcycle outlaw meets 'Nam chic. On threads alone, you couldn't get any more rock than Zodiac Mindwarp. "We have to thank Sonny Barger for that one," Mark admits. The Love Reaction almost could pass for Hell's Angels, except for a few minor adjustments. "Longer hair, better looking," he notes.

Shameless, handsome devils on a wild search for kicks, the Love Reaction headed for America, supporting Guns n'Roses on their endless "Appetite For Destruction" tour. "That was interesting," Mark remembers. "What was that cat's name?" "Axl," I remind him. "Yeah, with the funny little trousers," he laughs. It was widely reported at the time that the two camps did not exactly get along well. "It's true, we didn't. I thought they were shit, really. Cobalt kind of liked them, but I thought they were rubbish. Bunch of LA poofters." Zodiac was fond of expressing this opinion on stage at the time. "Well, history proved me right, didn't it?," Mark rhetorically asks. "He was just a bum from Nowhere, USA, that got lucky somewhere down the line, and he never got over it. Bunch of money, and he didn't even know how to spend it." Mark seems to know this story well. "It happens sometimes, talent-less people get money. Look at Elton John."

"ROCK AND ROLL IS CRIMINAL. IT'S CRIME WITH A 12-BAR BEAT. THAT'S WHAT WE WERE ABOUT. I THINK THE HIP-HOPPERS SAID THE SAME THING, ONLY WITHOUT THE TUNES"



The Love Reaction saw themselves as a breed apart from the other bands they toured with, a bit more clever than the rest. "I came from an art background, really, and it was more of a conceptual thing with us. We weren't just a bunch of rock and rollers from nowhere. It was a piece of art, like a painting or some writing. I just had this idea of putting together this rock and roll band, and it just took over my life. And it could have been a poem, or a painting, but it was a rock and roll band. And it was brilliant," he beams. "I loved it, and I still do. But it's only a piece of it all to me. I know that's what people remember me by, though, and I still can't believe it." He recounts a recent occurrence with one of his children. "My 13-year old daughter found the "Prime Mover" video in her mother's trunk, or somewhere, and she didn't know it was her dad. She's into, like Eminem, and she's like,

'Wow, this is like friggin' Eminem shit!,' you know with the schoolteachers' heads being blown off, or whatever. She dug it. So the shit goes on, you know."

Mark obviously wants to move on to other, more sublime victories, but I still want to know how he wrote "Prime Mover". After all, rock and roll is still trying to catch up with it. "Cobain was next in line to write it, I think," Mark says. "But he had that bitch, didn't he? She fucked that all up. By the way, I don't take any responsibility for Limp Bizkit," he says parenthetically. "I've got nothing to do with that shit."

That much is obvious. In fact, Zodiac's low profile in the 90s is one of the only explanations for the ongoing siege of bad rock and roll in America. Conversely, in parts of the world where his star never dimmed, rock has an entirely different face. In Scandinavia, the perpetually dark home of bands like Hardcore Superstar, Backyard Babies, Turbonegro, and Gluecifer, "Prime Mover" never went out of rotation. Although amused at it's lingering effect, Mark doesn't claim any genius alchemy to the song's construction. "We just nailed it," he says. "And we did it in a really sneaky way. Maybe not consciously sneaky, but we got away with it, and nobody really knows how." He laughs his throaty, super villain laugh. "You won't find it in the books," he says cryptically. "but anybody that knows about rock and roll knows about the documentation of that." I ask him if it has anything to do with his famed theory of "creative plagiarism." Another chuckle. "Absolutely. It's all material, you know. It's all just clay."

I ask Mark if, even during the height the Love Reaction's campaign of excess at all costs, he always had a clear delineation of where Mark Manning ended and Zodiac Mindwarp began. "Completely. I mean, can you imagine if Vincent Furnier was Alice Cooper all the time, walking down the street in make-up and killing babies?" Well, it is an amusing thought. "You won't find me out shagging chicks, you'll find me at the library, pouring over 18th century grimoires. That's how I get my kicks these days." Still, Mark must run into people on the street that expect a little rock star debauchery out of him. "No way," he informs me. "I'm a master of disguise, I wear glasses, for fuck's sake. I look nothing like the guy you see on stage or in pictures in my every day life, I look more like a librarian."



"I'M A MASTER OF DISGUISE, I WEAR GLASSES, FOR FUCK'S SAKE. I LOOK NOTHING LIKE THE GUY YOU SEE ON STAGE OR IN PICTURES IN MY EVERY DAY LIFE, I LOOK MORE LIKE A LIBRARIAN."

"If someone asks us to do a gig, and they seem cool, we'll play it," Mark says when I ask him about what's going on with the band these days. "The Love Reaction never split, really, we've always been going along, me and Cobalt. Robbie's on drums, and Texxy boy's on as well, he's an LA boy. We do shit, but the thing is, we rock. People seem to put us under the guise of record contracts and things, but really we're just a bunch of guys that just like to rock. It happens when it happens. Rock and roll is all about believing in yourself, and me and Cobalt still believe in ourselves. I mean, the reason that people know about the Love Reaction in the first place is because the money people got their hooks in," he explains. "That's what got us out there, but it was never our motivation to be some industry thing. All that merely amused us. If some guy in a bar says, 'I want you guys to play, I'll pay for you to fly here, or drive here,' then we'll play. I mean, how cool is that? No tours, no money, that's how we like to do it. Just show up and rock, man."

Such a casual approach to the business of rock belies the perception, at least of American fans, of the Love Reaction's struggle to keep the Huns at bay at the gates of the sweaty palace of rock, the last men standing in the battle to keep real rock and roll alive. Turns out it was never quite the blood ballet we thought it was, out there on the frontlines. "That perception is all from magazines and such," Mark says, "but really, the Love Reaction is just me and Cobalt and a guitar, looking for someplace to

rock. If there's cats making money off it from the back, that's irrelevant, really." I mention to him the bizarre letters circulating on the internet that he'd written over the years, letters that added to the pathos of the Love Reaction myth. In one, he wrote, in part, "Peter and John prepare the Last Supper. The agony, Christ is betrayed with a kiss. The bearded white gent tosses fairy tales and fiction into a turbulent cauldron of smart monkeys trying to unravel the universe with chainsaws and mathematics. I remember him long ago, when I was Walt Whitman."

"I used to get drunk at Cobalt's house and write stuff like that." He laughs at the perceived drama of it all. "I mean, to get into all that, like us against 'the business', it's all bollocks. We're nobody's monkeys, and we're not money junkies either. They never bought me, basically," he says, when talking about his dealings with the record industry. "And I never kissed ass, either. Besides, we always had other things going on. I had the writing, and Cobalt, he..." Mark pauses. "Well, I won't get into what Cobalt's into. Let's just say it's other things."

One of the best bits of Zodiac lore I'd heard in recent years was about the time he saved us human sinners from imminent destruction at the hands of otherworldly forces. Upon hearing that the Martians, or some other wrecking gang of aliens, planned on shattering Earth with laser beams, Z rushed to the North Pole, placing a Velvet Elvis on the exact spot they planned to mount their attack, warding off cosmic evil with rock and roll. As we are all still here, apparently his plan worked. "I'll tell you exactly what it was," Mark begins. "I ended up with this chick, and she kind of insisted that I hang up my leather trousers, basically. There was no way I was going to do that, end my rocking career, and say, 'OK, I'm going to go job hunting.' So I'm thinking, what is rock and roll? Well, rock and roll is Elvis Presley. So where can I take it that's the furthest place on the earth? The North Pole. So, it was very symbolic. Foolishly, I thought that would end my having anything to do with rock." Obviously, the plan had some sort of flaw. "It was a serious gesture," he says, "It just didn't fucking work. You just can't kill that shit, man. If rock and roll is in you, it's in you." Cursed by rock. "It's no curse, man. I love rock and roll." And while the true story may have nothing to do with aliens, it's got everything to about the universe, at least Zodiac's, where everything is connected by a blue suede sneer, and Instant Mythology is the order of the day. It's no wonder he's taken to writing, the ultimate lair of the divine liar.

"Yeah, so I started writing," Mark says. "I could have done anything, I could have gone looking for a job, but I'm a rocker, that's what I do." I ask him if he approaches the pen any differently than the microphone. "Whether I'm writing, or rocking, or talking on the phone, it's just another extension of what I am," he explains. It's no different, it's just what I'm into right now. And people seem to dig it, which is cool." I ask him how many he's written so far, as his books aren't the easiest to find stateside. "I've written them all," he jokes. *Crucify Me Again, that's on Codex. Get Your Cock Out*, that one's a bit of a joke, a porno thing, it's from Creation. *Bad Wisdom* is on Penguin, and then there's the one that's coming out in October. It's called *Fucked By Rock, the Unspeakable Confessions of Zodiac Mindwarp*. I'm quite proud of this one. It's about the band, and all the shit that goes on, being in a rock band and on the road. It's kind of like that Motley Crüe book, *Dirt*, only with an overview and some intelligence." We both laugh. "It's not just a list of drugs that you've taken. It's got insight, and there's no sort of remorse, or anything. It's just about what happened, and what I did, and what I learned. I have no remorse, really. It was cool, a real groovy time. I wouldn't want to do it again, though. "

"It's a different world, really," Mark says when I ask him what it's like rubbing elbows in literary circles. "For one thing, rock and rollers don't really read." Books don't elicit roars of approval from a mob of frenzied fans, either. "You're right, there's no immediate feedback like in rock and roll, but I like writing. It's really been taken as literature, these books, apart from the band thing. I've gotten good reviews, and people buy the books, so it's cool. Rock and roll is really my bag, though. I'd never give it up entirely."

With the publication of *Fucked By Rock* this October, Mark will have the opportunity to show off both talents. The book's release will coincide with some eagerly awaited stateside gigs on the West Coast. "We're doing a little tour, like ten dates", he tells me." We're playing the Viper Room, the Roxy – LA, San Francisco, all those places in between. Cobalt's handling all of that. I just turn up, you know." I ask Mark if he imagines that these shows will be triumphant occasions." The promoter seems to think so," he says, nonchalantly. "I don't really have an over view of it, I don't really think in those terms. I just cruise, baby."

Fucked By Rock purports to be the true story of the Love Reaction. In Mark Manning's world, however, truth has a tendency to change sides rapidly. "You know how I write, man, I write auto-biographical lies," he snickers. " I think lies tell the truth more than the truth does anyway." But how will the Love Reaction emerge from the pages of the book, better or worse than Motley Crüe did from their tell-all? "We're going to have to hide out for awhile," he reveals. "We tried to be elegantly wasted, tried to have some grace to our debauchery, that was really our thing. But we were young, you know."

Having taken successful stabs at music, art, and writing, you begin to wonder if there's anything Mark Manning can't do. "I can't act," he admits. "I tried, and I can't pull it off, I can't be a nerd." Of course, one could argue that Zodiac Mindwarp is a rather grand and complicated acting job. "No, that's me," he laughs. "I mean it's terrible, it's some deep shit, but it's not an act. I tried to do some bits on TV, or whatever, but the acting thing just didn't work. I'm either Mark, or Zodiac, that's it, there's no in-between. I can't be anyone else." Luckily, between the two, there's more than enough to work with. Even without a script.

As we wind things down, I remind Mark that it's a very short list of people that can save rock and roll, if called on to do so. And Zodiac Mindwarp is always at the top of that list. "I take that duty quite seriously, to be honest," Mark tell me. "Rock and roll is important. I think it's up to me and Iggy." I add Ian Astbury to the list, although it takes a couple of seconds for Mark to warm up to the idea. "Yeah," he finally decides. "Ian's pretty serious about it. There's a few of us that really do believe in the power of rock and roll, and we keep quiet about it. We do believe in it, and we're down there, somewhere. We're the cagiest motherfuckers, you won't catch us on tape, but we're there, man, we're there."

As we say our good-byes, I think of one more question to ask Mark, an important one. Is Zodiac Mindwarp a hero or a villain? A final cackle. "Zodiac Mindwarp is the grooviest of the groovy." Just as I expected. +

RETROACTIVELY PSYCHIC DIVINATIONS...

Me, I've been most charmed by Los Angeles, and that's cuz I've witnessed so many great concerts here lately. My favorite was the Tex & the Horseheads reunion in July, their first shows in almost 10 years. When they played "Oh Mother" at the Blue Cafe, I couldn't help but cry shamelessly as all the years tumbled back and out and in, triggering memories of lost friends and torn-down places and being connected to a mother, a family, strangers, new friends, dead friends. We were all punks, through blood and experience, and desire and desperation . . .who am I really. . . and where did everyone go, and why did it have to end?

I actually missed Tex & the Horseheads' set at Al's Bar in downtown L.A., arriving late, after the club was already too full. So shocked by the rare sight of a line at Al's, I didn't know what to do and, too impatient to wait, stomped off confused and drove home; too heartbroken to even listen from outside.

But I did snag a ride with the Pope and Dirty Ed down to the Blue Cafe in Long. Beach the following Monday, where the Horseheads pulled off a really satisfying, extra-long set, including "The Slip," whipped out by just Tex and Mike Martt during a break elsewhere onstage, and the determined stomp of "Short Train" ("I gotta leave right now!!"). Besides "Oh Mother," I was thrilled to death that T&TH played one of my all-time fave ballads, that heartbreaking elegy to the lost Cathay de Grande early-'80s trash-rock scene in Hollywood, "Big House Part Three," as well as the classics "Bordertown," "I'll Quit Tomorrow," the junkie romance of "The Spider & the Peach" and, of course, "Clean the Dirt," Mike's magnificent kiss-off ("If you really love me, you'd just go away") anthem. The renditions of "Cloudia" and "Slip Away" were contrastingly pretty asides amongst all the electric barbwire caterwauling and Mojave desert horsehead-lightning.

The Knitting Factory show in Hollywood (after a pretty fascinating comeback set by ahead-of-his-time '70s scuzz biker-rocker Simon Stokes, with funny and sick lyrics that *L.A. Weekly* writer Jonny Whiteside believes had to've influenced El Duce) a few days later was just as sentimental and thrilling, even enticing seldom-seen L.A. heartthrobs Pleasant Gehman (Screaming Sirens, Ringling Sisters) and Annette Zilinskas (Weatherbell, Blood on the Saddle, 3 Hole Punch) to come out of wherever they've been hiding, which I interpreted as an unbridled good omen. Even afterward, when we were all partying backstage, I was too shy, just like in the old days, to tell Texacala Jones how much her music meant to me, blah, blah, how it was a major chunk of my emotional architecture during the '80s from the beginning, when Gun Club's Jeffrey Lee Pierce was the first guitarist, all the way up to last week, and getting ONE MORE CHANCE to hear the classic Smog Vomit-Rock Vodka-Texacala-Mike Martt lineup again, how they were the permanent party soundtrack to my decade-long binge in the underground version of real Hollywood, that "Big House" was always the most reassuring and sweet-tempered and yet heartbreakingly wistful song to come down off bad trips with ("I had the same dream last night/The one where we're in the big house/And everybody was there/Partying like we didn't care...the rooms were dark with trash"), how her brave and improvisational and mysti-



FALLING

cally kooky persona and absurdist onstage digressions about Felix the Cat and orange juice had inspired me and cheered me up so much in bad times (and good).

I was too shy, just like in the old days, to tell Texacala Jones how much her music meant to me, blah, blah, how it was a major chunk of my emotional architecture during the '80s.

The other fucking amazing thing was getting to see Manu Chao in concert for the first time, on Wednesday, December 13, 2000 in Tijuana. He'd only played L.A. once before, a decade earlier at Club Lingerie in Hollywood, when he was still with Mano Negra (and I was still clueless and missed it). This time I was able to snag a ride across the border into Tijuana, Mexico to the sold-out show at the Auditorio Municipal. Making the long drive from L.A., we missed the opening band, who I believe were the Mexican Jumping Frijoles. Tijuana No's Teca Garcia, who'd come down from L.A. with a few of us, and clown-provocateur Luís Guerena snuck us through the backstage of the big arena, and I watched Tijuana No's middle set from behind the stage, looking into the looming, crowded rows of seats. I was surprised and happy that keyboardist-singer Cecilia Bastida was back in the group after a long absence that included backing up provocative, languid chanteuse Julieta Venegas. I still loved Tijuana No while Ceci was away, when Teca and Luis shared the singing, but there's something extra magical about the band with the full triumvirate of vocalists. Ceci even seemed to pogo onstage much higher than usual, an unwrapped bundle of saved-up energy. Halfway through Tijuana No's hometown set, I noticed a friendly, smiling man with a bandana 'round his head, standing next to me for a few songs. Manu Chao! I am a vortex!

HIT SQUAD

I even got to chat briefly with Manu after his press conference at the 3 Clubs on Vine Street in Hollywood. He'd once said it depends on what country he's in when he chooses the language to sing in a new song, so I asked him where he was when he wrote "Out of Time Man," a really hauntingly insidious, buoyantly mellow number, a tune he sings in English. He said he couldn't remember where he was when he wrote it, but that "Out of Time Man" was one of his favorites. A funny and contrary man, he told the gathered press that he was only playing a show in Hollywood because it was near Tijuana! He poetically described Tijuana as something like the "fever at the heart of world." I wish I could remember the exact quote. He had interesting and passionate things to say, in several languages, about a lot of things, like his support for the embattled Zapatistas in Chiapas and why Maradona is a more important futbol player than Pele.

The already hyped-up audience went totally bonkers when Manu Chao, backed by Radio Bemba, finally hit the stage in Tijuana. At times, it wasn't always clear which songs he was playing, since he'd take the lyrics from one classic off his first solo CD, "Clandestino," and use them against the music to other songs. It was all inexorably danceable and rhythmic, with lotsa ska upbeat strokes and moody reggae insistiveness, and his reedy, distinctive, yearning voice calling out to us in the spaces of the beats. I couldn't believe I was actually hearing "Welcome to Tijuana" in Tijuana, even as Manu made the arrangement more outwardly defiant and angry, the beat faster, the song more revolutionary than celebratory.

The sound was really horrible and muddy in the high-ceilinged arena, but the crowd went crazy anyway. In Tijuana, they do a form of crowd surfing where one or more surfers climb up on a large piece of wood, like a giant door, which is somehow held aloft by several people in the still-swirling pit (!), who then rock the plank back and forth to try to knock the surfer(s) off. It makes your average slam dance seem kinda plain. And actually, for all the frantic energy, the dancing wasn't malicious or intentionally violent like some pits get. People helped each other up and then ran back into the pit with its giant counterclockwise convulsion.

Next thing I remember, I'm eating little hot quesadillas and drinking a cool horchata on the sidewalk at a busy stand, my hungry eyes gulping down every passing car, every flash of moving light, the grand, courtly faces of older, European-style buildings, perhaps a different moon than the moon in the United States. I was relieved, however temporarily, however psychologically, however arbitrarily, to be in another country. The border could be anywhere. Or nowhere. The real California's really Mexico. There was a relentless hum of beguiling activity on the sleepless streets, in the bars, dance clubs and food stands, away from the tourist areas, as if Tijuana knew she was the center of the cosmopolitan world, wilder and more sophisticated than her homogenous, dullard stepsister city, San Diego. We weren't even hassled coming back over the border, which is a rarity for me, or at the INS checkpoint further up the 5 freeway, north of San Diego.

The sound mix was much better and the crowd only a little less over-the-top the next night, in another country, at the Palace in Hollywood. Radio Bemba were a perfect complement, with a trombone player furiously stabbing the air with his big instrument, percolating percussion and sharp drumming, a lead guitarist who

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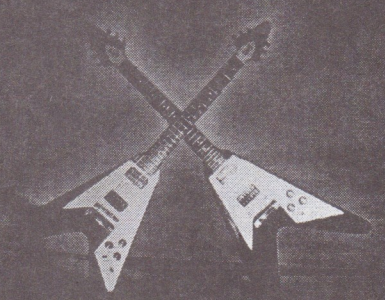
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unspooled some lovely Spanish-classical acoustic solos, etc. They did a surprisingly straightforward rock-blues version of "Marijuana Boogie," but the rest of the set was a seamless parade of progressively stranger and more alluring songs that blended and metamorphosed into each other, slinky, with all those insidious melodies and subtle flourishes.

The music physically lifted just everybody in unison, dancing wildly but not destructively, from the stage all the way back against the bar, in joyous absolution of all the ways and times and days we or the world have been lonely and in jail. It was a release, but not an escape. Manu Chao was like his hero Bob Marley, just speaking for a different generation of the dispossessed. It might have been the best concert I've ever seen. A full brain and body and soul experience. "Por la carretera..."

"There's an empty space right where your soul should be," Beki Bondage intones during "Submerge" on the new Vice Squad CD, "Lo-Fi Life." "Leftover lives, still in their cages." I know the feeling. That's why I slipped out of my cage long enough to steal away to Newport Beach on June 15, despite my aversion to Orange County, to catch Vice Squad at...a sports bar, Hoagie Barmichael's, after previous bookings were canceled at the Whisky a Go-Go in West Hollywood (immigration problems) and the Club Mesa in Costa Mesa (which shut down).

The Skulls went on before Vice Squad and managed to bestir some interest from the punks straggling in. Only singer Billy Bones remains from the original 1977 lineup, when the Skulls were truly one of Hollywood's best early punk bands, but his new, young lineup was pretty good, and it made sense to hear "Victims" again (but then, as a masochist, it always does). The Skulls' drummer, I don't remember his name, not only understands the Dave Drive style of rolling the toms with deceptive heft and speed, he even looked a little like the old Gears drummer.

Despite the locale and almost total lack of publicity, a good-size crowd of loyal, frenetic and sometimes obnoxious (there's always a few macho louts) punks eventually crawled out of nowhere and coagulated on the concrete (!?) dance floor for Vice Squad, who were loud and pulverizing yet in control. Beki Bondage starred as the superhero lion tamer/orchestra conductor, fending off those macho louts (admonishing them to let girls in the pit), sharing the mike with fans in the front singing along, and staying ahead of her steamroller group all at once. She even played mean rhythm guitar for much of the show.

Vice Squad ripped through "Coward," "You Can't Buy Back the Dead," "Stand Strong Stand Proud," a jubilant "Westend Stars," a fierce Motörhead cover and, of course, "Last Rockers," among others. I do wish they'd played longer; I've still never seen 'em crank out "Take Too Many E's"! What can you do? Is it blasphemy to say that the current lineup is an awesome entity in the hear/here and now, never mind the band's mythologically legendary famous historic classic history? Longtime guitarist Paul Rooney plays some really lovely, melodic solos (soul-ohs) and chiming octave progressions, underneath all the distortion and chunka-chunkas, while drummer Tony Piper and bassist Michael Giaquinto always hold down a requisitely brutal, solid and heavy bottom during both simple parts and explosive changes.

It also helps to have a baleful, spitfire lead singer who's still rebellious and angry (and why wouldn't she be? It's not like we won the revolution or anything) about big business and crooked politicians and how "the war machine rumbles on." I admire the way she rouses a disparate crowd of misfit punks to collective inspiration and self-confidence, all with good humor and grace and self-deprecation. And on top of that, I have such a hopeless crush on her!!

I wanted to talk to her afterward, and even had my chance when she was all by herself, packing up her guitar case. Instead, I stood nearby for a few daring moments, paralyzed, as stupid and geeky and useless of a fan as I've ever been! I stared quickly at her, unseen, mute, then walked away!

"LEFTOVER LIVES, STILL IN THEIR CAGES."

I think Vice Squad's "Lo-Fi Life" (Sudden Death Records) is another underrated, kickass rock, punk AND metal album. Although there are naturally plenty of rowdy and catchy shout-alongs like "Someone Else," and the rueful, sentimental slam "Where Are They All Now?" — as well as some heavier and surprisingly successful variations on old classics "Last Rockers" and "Stand Strong, Stand Proud" — two of the most mesmerizing new songs turn out to be the least overtly punk rock in style. "Submerged" slithers decadently through dark, elaborate hallways, Bond's vocals veiled mysteriously in filters, while the anti-poverty invocations and accusations on "Lo-Fi Life" bump to a sinister, lurking heavy dub-metal groove. Look under the rocks, you'll see it.

PART II:

I've been to so many exceptional shows, going back to fall 2000, it makes me dizzy. The Real Kids played at the Garage a couple of times in the last year or so. My dilettante combo, the Leaving Trains, even got to open for 'em in October 2000, along with the Pinkz. I thought our set was really off, the sound crummy, and though we tried our best, our performance was a keen disappointment nonetheless. The Real Kids weren't at their best either (although they definitely blew us away, let's be real!), but were still magical. They wove together a really clear and fragile and lovely version of their romantic ballad about ephemeral Boston, "Common at Noon," that sparkled in the murky club. We didn't deserve it. The set ended prematurely because too many drunks were brawling, quite a contrast to the music. The bouncers weren't doing anything about it, so singer John Felice finally gave up. The next time the Kids came through town, with the guy from the Groovie Ghoulies replacing the ex-Decals bassist, it rained, I recall. In front of a smaller, more benign crowd of hardcore fans, the Real Kids pulled off a much better, unusual set with lotsa rare songs.

The Leaving Trains played with the 440s in October at the historic (and now rumored to close in fall 2001) Linda's Doll Hut in Anaheim, one of the few clubs in O.C. I've ever liked. Only the bartender showed up for us this time. Even Linda wasn't there. I suppose it had something to do with the massive construction repairs on the 5 freeway, which forced us to go through a labyrinth of detours to get to the small, red bar. Or maybe it was just typical Trains vs. Orange County mutual repulsion. Since the bartender did want us to play for her, the 440s and Trains put on full-force, rockin' sets as if we were in sold-out stadiums, and turned up our volumes accordingly. I finally got to hear the 440s' version of the Trains' "Gas, Grass or Ass," which was hot. We all had fun, and no one was mad at us, so it counted as a great time.

Somewhere in there I saw more than one set apiece by the revitalized, skin-shedding jazz-punk mutationalists Saccharine Trust, poetic wraith-invocators the Dagons, Rilo Kiley, demented orchestra W.A.C.O. and Third Grade Teacher...Got in to see the White Stripes several times at Spaceland, before their new drunken-fratboy audience got too annoying. I still love Jack White's songwriting, whether he's doing raspy blues or these endearing Kinks-type pop tunes or a Dolly Parton cover or whatever's perversely appro-

priate that moment...The Dictators invaded Spaceland in September, commencing with Handsome Dick's boundary-defining warning to us all that we were now in Bronx territory, before the onslaught and bravado of "New York, New York." And so we were.

Other legendary pageantry: The dark-haired, enigmatic Julieta Venegas at El Rey theater. She wrote one of my favorite Tijuana No songs, "Pobre de Ti," and her second solo CD, "Buenvento," is a sublime pop reverie. Live, she was backed by TJN's Ceci Bastida on keyboards; in fact her whole band was sharp, while Venegas was a charismatic presence...Hey, James, don't forget the Humpers' reunion shows with original guitarist Jeff Fieldhouse and bassist Jaybird Blake. I'd actually never seen those two before, despite the dozens of times I've caught the later, still-great Mark "Anarchy" Lee and Mitch Cartwright lineups. Fieldhouse was fired up and amazing, whether desperately howling backups or pointing his guitar neck iconically to the ceiling, giving himself over to the guitar strings, which jerked him and made him twitch like a demon puppet. The comeback show was at the big bar adjacent to Java Lanes bowling alley in Long Beach, November 3, 2000. When Jimi Silveroli dove into the audience to beat up some guy, the Humpers kept playing, with singer Scott Drake tapping along sardonically on drums, until Silveroli jumped back up onstage, waving his arms over his head like a triumphant boxer. The next night the Trains opened for the Humpers in Costa Mesa, which was also a typically crazy, violent show.

Jeff Fieldhouse went back to Oregon, but the rest of the Humpers, with Billy Burks and Mark and Jaybird, have already played more shows in 2001, and seem to be back together for real.

Even as the Humpers came back, Popdefect, of all bands, broke up. I caught their last two L.A. shows at Spaceland and Al's Bar (they followed with two goodbye shows in Seattle). I can still see the crowd at Al's hopping madly to the compulsive, circular instrumental "That Was It" at the end, everyone holding up political-convention-type signs, each with a photo of one of the three Popdefectors, passed out midsong by *Flipside*'s Gus Hudson, and the band staring back in horror and shock at a sea of their own cardboard-cutout faces.

Also in November 2000: those hot Short Fuses shows at Spaceland and especially Al's, where Travis Ramin & Georgia Peach whipped out a fierce cover of the Humpers' "Hey Shadow" out of the blue (and boy, can that gal really belt it out!)...the Controllers and Dogs reunions at the Bigfoot Lodge in Atwater. The Controllers (whose sludgy-ominous "Jezebel" was the first and still the best of all the punk remakes) were kinda off that night, but it was a jolt to see the Dogs for the first time. They moved to L.A. from Detroit in the mid-'70s, kind of a link between the MC5 and early L.A. punk. The Dogs were already legendary when I began going to shows in January 1978, but I never actually saw 'em till now; hearing rants like "Fed Up" and "John Sinclair" live in Atwater was like getting a clean-window reminder, straight back to what really started it all for me. They were totally rockin', as were the Skulls, in a surprise one-song appearance at the end ("Kill Me Kill Me Kill").

December 2000: an up-and-down and unfortunately Xmas-themed bill at Al's Bar, with members of Backbiter faring best in a hot set of Ramones and Sabbath covers and the reclusive Donovan's Fairies, who did a short set with stuff like with Melanie Bruck's winsome tuff-girl "Cherry Bomb"...Scott Drake (Humpers/Vice Principals) kinda sucked in a one-time-only-let's-hope-appearance by the Kris Kringle Conspiracy, with Steve Reed on bass and Brick Wahl on drums. They hadn't practiced even once, and attempted to run through horrible Xmas carols like "Jingle Bells" and "Deck the Halls" without knowing the chords or words. It was so utterly bad, it was completely fascinating and hilarious...I caught another great White Stripes shindig at Spaceland, although it was too crowded and we weren't allowed in until after the BellRays' set...and another Dagons show, with Drew's incantational cymbal slashings and Karie's plaintive fairy-tale lamentations, circling above us reproachfully like word wreaths, or wraiths...a great set by Humpers/Joneses spinoffs the Vice Principals at the Garage, along with Lazy Cowgirls and the Excessories, led by Melanie Bruck (Donovan's Fairies, Sluts for Hire) and ace guitarist Rich Coffee (Tommyknockers, Egomaniacs). The Excessories are very poppy punk, sweet-hearted and innocent, with something like a Ramonesy approach to Blondie. In fact they do a faithful, guileless version of "X-Offender."

Ironically there weren't any good shows in L.A. for New Year's Eve. I was very tempted to fly to Detroit, because the White Stripes were playing with two bands I've been desperately wanting to see for a while now, the Come Ons and the Detroit Cobras. They're both kinda retro, but in superior ways. The Come Ons exude this groovy '60s sound with ballpark and gospel organ grind, and a singer who's the queen of serene. The Detroit Cobras boast a fireball vocalist who's like Little Eva and Martha Reeves and half of Motown and Phil Spector's girl groups all at once! But I finally realized I couldn't afford to go, and couldn't get off work anyway, so I reluctantly stayed in town. I can't be everywhere!

The hits kept coming in 2001: at the Silverlake Lounge, an all-too-rare appearance by alluring balladeer Eleni Mandell, who kinda evokes a Raymond Chandler L.A. with her lovingly lingering voice and languid persona...high-energy E.L.A. punkx Union 13 and the Dickies (whose brilliantly impertinent new song about Courtney Love from "All This and Puppet Stew" has this really catchy, jangly lead-guitar figure by the estimable Stan Lee) at the Troubadour...the Gossip at Spaceland, rootsy and trashy, like a femme counterpoint to the White Stripes, perhaps...Slobberbone at Spaceland, and sometime last year in a now-defunct C&W bar in Culver City. The Slobbers are a kind of countryish but rockin' Texan band in a Green on Red, Replacements, Soul Asylum range, somewhere between Dylan and Lynyrd Skynrd, harmonica woes and propulsive, noisily strummed power ballads like "Give Me Back My Dog," which kinda sez it all.

Blasphemous tart Tammy Faye Starlite & her ace backup band, the Angels of Mercy, returned to the Knitting Factory in Hollywood, with new jokes about giving the Middle East to the Southern Baptists. Miss Tammy symbolically married Jesus onstage — it was nice to make it official since they'd been living in sin for so long.

I walked like a zombie through Tongue front woman Liz McGrath's impressively detailed art exhibit of of gleaming porcelain people, a horrific nurse, bats and other strange creatures locked up in glass box coffins, hanging on the walls at La Luz de Jesus gallery in February 2001...I was enchanted to see the debut of "The Selfish Giant", an original ballet by Steve Gregoropoulos (ex-Wild Stares) based on the Oscar Wilde story, performed by his mini-orchestra, W.A.C.O. (the Wild Acoustic Chamber Orchestra), with Jane Paik's dance group in March. The music evocatively accompanied the tale of a probably Republican giant who won't share his beautiful garden with the neighborhood children until he has a change of heart, with eloquent, sometimes unusual passages denoting shifts of season and mood, more linear than W.A.C.O.'s vocal songs. Some of the dancers were kinda amateurish, even bumping into each other, although the better ones were quite expressive. The story of "The Selfish Giant" works well as a ballet,

and Steve's music approaches beauty from unusual angles.

Then I saw: Ex-Girl (doing some great visual stuff with transparent plastic hats and unique a cappella harmonies), the always pulverizing No Means No, the Evaporators (with the audience passing Nardwuar around the room like he was Peter Gabriel, and among all the silliness, some really great catchy punk songs like "Woof Woof I'm a Goof" that stayed in my head for months), OutKast (well I WISH I'd seen 'em — sold out!), the Bobbyteens, Chicken Hawks, Tijuana No on Cinco de Mayo at the Knitting Factory, Urinals and Human Hands at Spaceland (Urinals debuting some great new songs, some of their best ever; Human Hands doing a weird, acoustic-with-strings version of "Jubilee," Dennis Duck on vocals, before Possum Dixon's Rob Zabrecky came up for the rest of a short set)...catching the end of a thrilling performance by the Vibrators at Head Line record store on Melrose in Hollywood (like half the world, the Trains used to cover "Baby, Baby")...the Hangmen with a new bassist and a great new snarling-rock CD, "Metallic I.O.U.," opening for Wayne Kramer on a Sunday night at Spaceland...the Bangs at the Silverlake Lounge in May...Snap-Her at Head Line, one of the last shows before the store's landlord put an end to such live punk rock activity on the premises...the record store survives, like punk rock, however...climbing down the hill from the observatory to observe, through the fence, Spinal Tap at the Greek Theater, and getting bitten about twenty times by mosquitoes...the Centimeters and the intriguing Nora Keyes (whose best songs go beyond the merely wacky into the almost exotic)...the return of J.G. Thirlwell, a.k.a. Foetus, a.k.a. Clint Ruin (a master magician, but I actually preferred Foetus' pre-recorded parts and samples and technological self-conversationalizin' to the live accompaniment of his more jarringly ordinary, rockish band)...the Humpers with one of my fave local bands, the Angoras, and their girl-group with claws exultations and anti-suburban invocations, at the Garage...finally caught up with Tom Watson & Best of All at the Silverlake Lounge (Watson's new, SST-ish, Meat Puppets-ish solo CD is a bit different moodistically than his slightly more New Wave, poppy band, but both have Watson's classic, shimmering guitar licks; he's played with Mike Watt & Pair of Pliers, Overpass, Red Crayola, Slovenly Peter, Toxic Shock), Backbiter (who finally have something out on CD again, an excellent hard rock romp that's a split Man's Ruin release with Elope, a cool Nordic band revamping a '60s Pretty Things vibe maybe, some great songs and playing by both bands), EMA 3 at Mr. T's twice...and a special, improvisational all-instrumental noisy synth dual by synth duo Dennis and Fred during a "No Talent" night at Al's Bar, when I was one of three people there.

In April I flew to Italy on vacation and was lucky enough to catch Rappresaglia at the Leon Cavallo culture center in Milano, a former squat that persisted so long that the governent had to grudgingly allow it to flourish. Rappresaglia have been around in some disguise or another for about 20 years and don't play that often even in their Milanese hometown. They cranked out most of their hits, like the classics "Attack" and my favorite, "Distruggi L'Illusione" ("destroy the illusion"), and manic covers of "Viva la Revolucion," Stiff Little Fingers' "Alternative Ulster," and a Ramones song in honor of Joey Ramone, who'd just died (which hit me like a sucker punch, "it's the end of the century"...that Ramones concert with the Runaways and the Quick in January 1978 at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium was my first rock show, and the beginning of my real life, the first time I realized I wasn't the only freak in the world). Other bitchen bands I saw on my Italian trip included the Crooks (scummy anti-dog rock and punk combo), Succo Marcio (the dreaded poppy punk, but with a few especially melodic and memorable ravers, and hints of trad Italiana), a rare rehearsal by moody chanteuse Ilaria Senesie and her Nearly Girls (who've never played live, so this practice was the closest thing we'll ever get to a show), Temporal Sluts (with a new lineup), and a couple more I'm spacing about right now. I wish I'd wandered around even more, but I was mainly marooned in the conservative towns of Como and Milano. Half of the locals seem fascist, the rest socialist. I had the most fun in Bologna, which was more liberal and artistic, and stunning with its medieval architecture, stately squares and looming churches, elaborate doorknockers and grand porticos in the old downtown labyrinth of streets.

Returning to this hunka hunka burning continent, I've made it to see my punk faves, the anti-cop, anti-boss, pro-beer Beautys; the bewitching Barbara Manning & the Go-Luckys at the Fold, then a quick dash up Silver Lake Boulevard to catch the end of Alejandro Escovedo's Spaceland set; a fascinatingly perverse Cheap Trick show in Anaheim House of Blues — Rick Nielsen's son on drums in place of Bun E. Carlos, MIA (!) with a back injury; a moronic inbred audience brawling for guitar picks; some instant classic brand-new songs. And yet Rick (who'd shaved his bizarre, long wizardlike goatee) didn't throw out a Kiss LP during "Surrender." Some traditions were subverted; Dennis Carlin said it was like seeing Cheap Trick on the "Jerry Springer Show"...The Now Time Delegation, a collaboration between powerhouse BellRays singer Lisa Kekaula and noisy guitarist Tim Kerr (Big Boys, Poison 13). Their debut CD on Larry Hardy's In the Red Records, "Watch For Today," has some great '60's sound and blues-rock covers and like-minded originals. I think only the Detroit Cobra's Rachel Nagy can compete with Kekaula's superior wailin'. NTD's debut at Fais Do-Do was a bit of a letdown, though, because of the club's poor sound system, and Kerr's severe tuning problems. I'd see 'em again in better circumstances, and in any event, I highly recommend "Watch For Today."

Believe it or not, I'm leaving out descriptions of a lot of other shows, but you get the idea. I can't remember everything! Many of these concerts are happening in empty clubs. Many are free. In ten years we'll all be trampling each other to get in the general vicinity of these bands, like the way everyone's ready to kill each other now over the White Stripes. Well, I feel guilty that I've seen so much, not all of it on television, and often kept it to myself. I feel redeemed now that I've trapped the outlines of some of it, at least, on paper. Er, computer screen.

And, finally, what DO I really think of Britney Spears? I do make a lot of jokes about her. So many in fact that you have to wonder if I don't actually have a crush on her. Please! She's no Beki Bondage! Well, it is nice to see a celebrity who's actually foxy, with a tan. But Britney Spears has too many right-wing friends, whether it's Bob Dole or Mickey Mouse. On the other hand, I like some of her music. Really. Not like the Ramones or something I'd go out of my way for, but enjoyable...the guilt just adds to the pleasure. Disbelievers should check out the Shakes' new remake of "Oops!...I Did It Again," which rescues the inner Kinks song buried in Britney's modern-technology hit. It's a cool arrangement by the Shakes' Peter Gilabert (Veg Ex) and Janet Housden (ex-Redd Kross, *L.A. Times*, ex-Excessories, etc.) and Pete makes it all deliciously malicious: "I'm not that innocent." So maybe there's justification for the ambitious cola peddler yet, just like Mariah Carey's hospitalization for "exhaustion" gives the rest of us hope, now that even the industry's shiniest robots are starting to break down. ⊕

Falling James
July 2001
Silver Lake, Los Angeles

LEGENDS NEVER DIE:

JEFF DRAKE & THE HOLLYWOOD JONESES!



BY JASON DIMITRI MONROE, CONJUROR OF MISCHIEF

...HOW THEY AFFECTED ME...

I can't say for sure what year I discovered the Joneses, because my chronological-memory is so completely shot, but growing up in Ohio in the 80's wasn't like it is today, where everything's immediately accessible. My older bandmate, Brian Morgan, made bi-annual trips to Columbus to cherry-pick through all the discounted punk vinyl at the Singing Dog and Magnolia Thunderpussy record stores, back when they were still cool, and that stack of wax would have to sustain our little circle of misfits for the next six or seven months. There was no Napster. No internet. Just *Kerrang!* and *Circus*, which were metal-oriented, and *Creem* magazine—back when the Clash alternated covers with the original Van Halen—and *Spin*, which was actually pretty good; initially,they even ran regular 7-inch and demo-reviews, no shit. There were some shows in nearby Ft. Wayne, Indiana, at a Sunday night matinee called 7th Level. There was MTV's "120 Minutes" and the I.R.S. "Cutting Edge Happy Hour", and only very occasionally we'd see a stray copy of *Flipside* or *Forced Exposure*. But mainly, we all relied on our pen-pals' compilation tapes and whatever Brian brought back from the big college town.

One of the best records anyone ever bought for 99 cents was the timeless rocker by the JONESES, "Keeping Up With The Joneses". This was right around the same time I was discovering Social Distortion in "Another State Of Mind", Joan Jett and the Blackheart's "Album", Redd Kross' "Love Doll Superstar", Generation X's "Into the Valley Of The Dolls", and that "Hell Comes To Your House" compilation, and it was unlike anything else I'd ever heard. Snotty country music mixed with sleazy punk rock...I used to stare at that album cover for hours, instinctively comprehending that these flamboyantly-garbed criminals in the picture were foreshadowing my own ramshackle destiny. The bleached blonde dude in the Joneses looked like Neal X before he did, and the Loreal blue-black dudes looked like urban gypsies-west coast hoodlums: sneering, garage sale Keefs. They stole Aerosmith's best song and made it their own. All my early ill-fated, drunken glam bands, like Murder Stars and Pale Imitations, butchered "She's So Filthy"; and to this day, "Pillbox" is covered by novice punks as frequently as "Pretty Vacant" or "Sonic Reducer". It's become a standard. There was even a dynamite NYC rock band called Pillbox.

Years later, and miles and miles down the bloody road to rock'n'roll, when I was in the midst of some kind of seriously desperate, psychotic, chemically-ravaged, near-death, emotional disintegration over the deaths of my best friends and a gut-wrenching rock'n'roll divorce, a mutual friend thoughtfully put me on the phone with an empathetic JEFF DRAKE who, being an experienced and surprisingly compassionate older rock'n'roll fugitive himself, was somehow able to kinda console me for a minute and talk me down. I'm obviously embarrassed that this was my introduction to one of my childhood heroes, but that was what I was like, back in the decline of my drinking days, when the nightmare years were closing in, right before I finally ran out of all my teenage fairy dust and bravado, fell to Earth, and lost all my superhero powers. I used to call all my rockstar pirate-outlaw-heroes up in the middle of some crazy AM panic, demanding instructions and expecting them to know what I was supposed to do next. Like there was some kind of map. All apologies, You Guys. You Know Who You Are.

Anyway, in my eyes, JEFF DRAKE is one of the ALL-TIME ROCK'N'ROLL GREATS. An Original. A Perfect Example of what I mean when I say it's OK to start somewhere, but you're supposed to go beyond your fucking

influences to make it your own. I mean, obviously, Jeff Drake was influenced by Hank Williams and Chuck Berry and Keith Richards, but if you listen to the Joneses you don't hear Stones Clones. You hear an inimitable, punk rock version of classic 50's-style bluesey trash and swaggering honky-tonk raunch, but with a True Voice, whereas today's dime a dozen J.T. wanna-be's ain't got their own personality or their own message or their own spin on it, y'know? They're just carbon copies playin' retro-rehash. Junkie Romance, kid...

What's even more inspiring about JEFF DRAKE than his unique talent and fierce originality is his soulfulness, his generosity of spirit, and the unlikely fact that he's still here to tell us his story after years of hard-knocks, bad timing, fuck-ups, jailtime for bank robbery, and dancing with Mister Brownstone. I wrote a glowing review of his "After School With...THE VICE PRINCIPALS" album on Sympathy that he recently recorded with his brother, notorious Humpers Kingpin SCOTT "DELUXE" DRAKE, and Scott's Humpers partner-in-crime, a True Rock'n'roll Gentleman, "BADASS" BILLY BURKE, for *Hit List*, but for some reason it never got printed. I think it talked about how I'd be giving copies of this record to all my younger guitar-player pals as a sorta text-book as to how it's done. If you're askin' me, Drake and Burke are still about the best guitar-assassins in the business. OK, I'm rambling...Let me give you over to the living legend/soul-survivor/proto-"punk'n'roll's" true icon, JEFF DRAKE. Oh yeah, his game is better than ever.

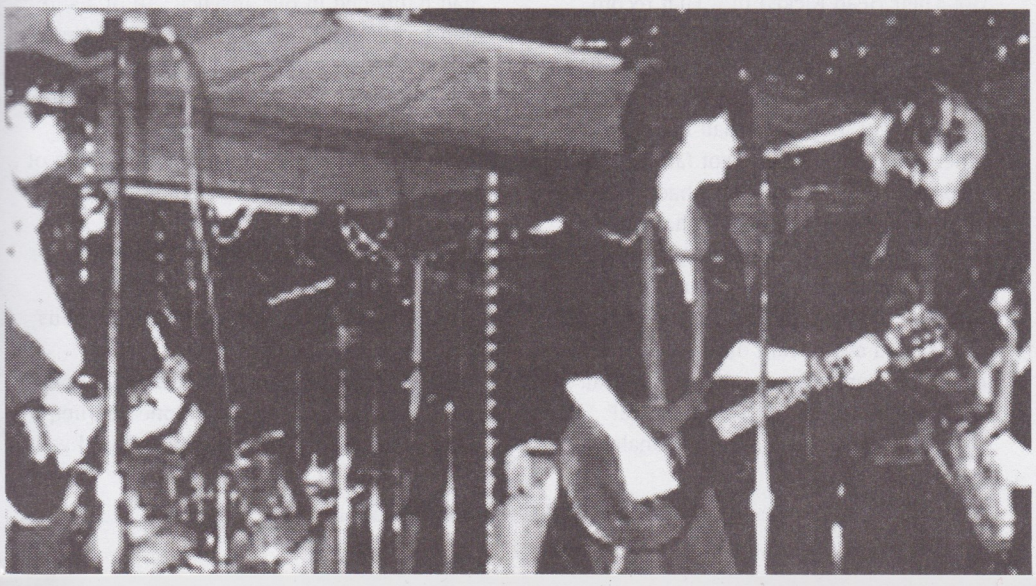
Origins

Jeff Drake: I was born in Anaheim, California. I'm the oldest of three kids. My parents were still very young and we were quite poor when I was very young. We lived in Anaheim and Orange County until I was twelve, when my family moved to a little town in the central, agricultural part of California called Merced. Growing up in Southern California, it was a complete culture shock going up there. Agriculture is king, and at that time Merced was still very small, just 28,000 people.

I don't remember when I "discovered" rock'n'roll. It was always kind of around. My Dad was from the "American Graffitti" era, so we had a lot of fifties records in the house. Luckily for me, his favorites seem to have been Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Bo Diddley, the Coasters, stuff like that. The first musician I remember being interested in was Elton John in maybe 1972. Glam Rock was the shit at that point, so it wasn't long before I was into the New York Dolls, Mott the Hoople, T.Rex, Slade, Sweet, they were all big just then. And of course, the Rolling Stones. Somehow, even before I was really sure what it was, I knew the Stones played some serious rock'n'roll. Maybe it was 'cause my parents hated them.

This is probably going to make a lot of people vomit, but I can remember the moment I knew I wanted to be a guitar player. It was when I saw the movie,"The Song Remains The Same". This was before punk rock, so it wasn't mandatory to hate Led Zeppelin yet. Anyway, I thought Jimmy Page was cool. I think it was his attitude more than anything else. I knew that I at least wanted to act like a guitar player. So I decided to play guitar and began looking to get in a group. This wasn't easy in Merced. There were only two "high school" type bands in Merced at that time, and I couldn't play, so neither one wanted me. Plus, I had a reputation for liking "weird" music. But my best friend and the only other kid at school who was into the same music as me was a bass player. One of only two. And the other one was already in one of the bands. So when he told the band that needed a bass player that we were a package deal, I was in. Once they realized I could write songs, they were a little more accepting of me. I had to play some Eagles and Journey songs, but I made them play "Pillbox" and "Criminals", both of which I wrote when I was 16, before I could play a guitar or anything. People still say that "Pillbox" is their favorite Joneses song, and that's the one bands cover. I don't know why. I feel like I've written way better stuff since then. I'd hate to think that I peaked when I was 16. I knew college was no place for me, so as soon as I graduated from Merced High, I moved to L.A. to start my music career.

"THIS WAS BEFORE PUNK ROCK, SO IT WASN'T MANDATORY TO HATE LED ZEPPELIN YET. ANYWAY, I THOUGHT JIMMY PAGE WAS COOL. I THINK IT WAS HIS ATTITUDE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE. I KNEW THAT I AT LEAST WANTED TO ACT LIKE A GUITAR PLAYER."



Rockabilly!

Jeff Drake: I moved back to L.A. to stay (for then) on New Year's Day of 1981. The first week I was in town, me and my brother Scott went down to the Cuckoo's Nest to see Agent Orange. When we got there, we found out that Agent Orange had cancelled and that there was a rockabilly band onstage. By this time,I had gotten away from punk rock because the scene had turned hardcore. I was into the Clash, Professionals, stuff like that.

I had been into rockabilly for a little while, and this was before the Stray Cats, so there was a rockabilly scene but it was very small.

Anyway, this band was called the Aristocrats and they were playing "Down The Road Apiece", so they caught my attention. I also couldn't help but notice that all three of them were wearing brothal creepers. I had been fascinated by those shoes ever since I first saw the Clash wearing them in some photo, but I could never find them (which is not hard to believe in Merced). When the Aristocrats finished their set, I went up to talk to them to find out where to buy some creepers. It turned out that they were looking for a guitar player and I was looking for a band. The members of the Aristocrats were Steve Olson, Joey Escalante (later a member of the Vandals), and Johnny McCarty.

I played a couple of gigs with the band and struck up a fast friendship with Steve Olson. I was soon kicked out of the band for, from my perspective, not being "Howdy Doody" enough. I was a little rough around the edges and played with distortion on my guitar, so I wasn't enough of a purist for Mister McCarty. When I was fired, Steve Olson bailed,too. He ended up in another rockabilly band called the Rockaholics. He soon got me to join and, before too long, Ron Emory (T.S.O.L.) was playing with us before we all got kicked out for being a little too "bad". Me and Steve were tired of getting kicked out of these square rockabilly bands, so we decided to start our own.



The Savage Young Joneses

Jeff Drake: Steve knew a drummer from a New Wave band called Tans From the Sun (Mitch), and Ron was unhappy with T.S.O.L. at that moment, so we decided to start playing together, just rehearsing and going over songs. Mitch said he could get us a couple of gigs around Xmas-time, this was early December, so we had something to get ready for. The only problem was that we didn't have a singer. I did not consider myself a singer and I had no interest in being one, but since I was the one writing the songs I agreed to do it until we found a "real" singer. We never found one, as it turned out. The first two Joneses shows were opening for Missing Persons on Xmas Eve and for the Dickies the next night. Nobody knew who we were, of course, but we went over well and had played to a couple of big crowds, so there was some word of mouth right away. The Joneses had been together just three weeks when we went into the studio to record the "Jonestown/Criminals" 7". I'd just as soon forget about that record. It's kind of embarrassing now. Leave it to the collectors.

The next time the Joneses recorded was in April of 1982, for the BYO comp "Someone Got Their Head Kicked In". That record helped us a lot, no thanks to the Stern Brothers. We stuck out like a talented thumb on that hardcore comp. The Stern Bros. said we alone got more hate mail than all the other bands put together got fan mail. It did help us, though. That record had "Pillbox" on it, and for a lot of people that was their first exposure to the Joneses. We toured behind that one, and were amazed at the response. We couldn't believe people outside of L.A. had even heard of us, or that they knew the words to our songs. In the Fall of 1982, we recorded the "Criminals" EP. Steve Jones of the Sex Pistols/Professionals was originally gonna produce that one, but it never came together. We toured after that one and then started making personnel changes. At that time we were far more popular in places like New York than we were in L.A.

Steve Olson left the band for the first time one week before our second tour. He was replaced by John James, who I stole from Levi and the Tribe. We toured in the Spring of 1983. By this time, Steve Olson had left the band and John James had replaced him. We were totally shocked by the response we got on this tour. We still weren't real popular in L.A., but everywhere else was another story. We were treated like rockstars in N.Y.C. By the time we got back home, I guess word had gotten out, because all of a sudden we were drawing big crowds. Shortly after we got back, John and Mitch forced me to kick Steve Houston out of the band to be replaced by Rhys Williams. I've always regretted that decision and still resent those two for the ultimatum they presented me with. After that, it's hard to keep up with the personnel changes. They came fast and furious. Over the years, there were something like 30+ different guys in the Joneses. We went back into the studio to record "I'm Bad" and "She's So Filthy" sometime in 1983. By this time,we were one of the biggest unsigned bands in L.A. The major labels were getting interested and everything seemed groovy.

The Toast of the Town

Jeff Drake: We got back from tour in June '83, and I couldn't believe what had happened in our absence. All of a sudden (seemingly), we were one of the most popular bands in town. Our shows were selling out with lines down the street, and the L.A. *Weekly* was writing about our every move each week. This was the beginning of the period of wholesale personnel changes. From June '83 to June '84, the entire band turned over except me, the drummer twice! Mitch left to play metal in T.S.O.L., to be replaced by Nicky Beat (ex-Weirdos, Venus and the Razorblades, etc.). Nicky was replaced by Paul Mars, aka Paul Black, aka Paul Marmorstein. As I mentioned earlier, Steve Houston left to be replaced by Rhys

"DANNY ONLY STARTED SNOOPING AROUND AFTER THE TIMES ARTICLE WHEN HE LEARNED THAT WE WERE THE TOP-DRAWING UNSIGNED BAND IN TOWN. HE THOUGHT IT WAS A SLAM DUNK FOR HIM 'CAUSE HE HAD FRIENDS AT ELEKTRA AND KNEW THEY WERE ALREADY INTERESTED."

Williams, who left to be replaced by Johnny Sage. John James left early in '84 to marry and settle down with Penelope Spheeris (author's note: I think he means Avengers vocalist Penelope Houston), to be replaced by Scott Franklin (formerly of the Mau-Maus, now with Mr. Badwrench). John eventually moved to Portland, Oregon, robbed a pizza parlor on a bike with some kind of knife, and is now doing seven years in Oregon for armed robbery. This line-up of myself, Scott Franklin, Paul Mars, and Johnny Sage was the Joneses line-up that enjoyed the most success, and is thought of by most people as one of the two "classic" Joneses line-ups.The other being myself, Mitch, and the Steves (Olson and Houston).

By early '84, we were the talk of the town. The L.A. *Weekly* readers voted us "Most Loved Band In L.A.", the L.A. *Times* ran a nice long article in the Sunday Calendar Section (not an easy thing to obtain for a band like us), we were drawing big crowds, and the major labels were salivating. When that happens, all kinds of people come out of the woodwork. For example, Danny Sugarman. Danny was an errand-boy for the Doors back when hippies walked the earth, and somehow parlayed that into managing the Doors' business affairs (after Jim Morrison's death) and writing best-selling schlock about himself and the rockstars he's brown-nosed. Danny somehow managed to convince us that with him as our manager, we were guaranteed a record deal with Elektra. We did come very close. I went to meetings with Tom Zutaut (then head of A&R at Elektra), who would tell me how much money Elektra was gonna give me every month just to write songs and rehearse with the band. It sounded like Heaven. But, alas, 'twas not to be.

Over the Xmas holiday in '84, Danny took off to Mexico to finish his latest book, (the forgettable fishwrap *Wonderland Avenue*). While he was away, I would go to his accountant's office to pick up checks and would receive messages from Danny like: "Had a great idea! Joneses should go in a leather 'n' chains direction à la Motley Crüe."

Obviously, Danny was clueless. He wanted Ray Manzarek to produce the demo we never did for Elektra. Ray seemed like a nice guy, but should he be producing the Joneses? Was Grace Slick busy? Anyway, I digress.

While Danny was in Mexico, Tom Zutaut left Elektra for Geffen and was replaced by Peter Philbin, formerly of CBS. The most rockin' bands Geffen had at the time were Neil Diamond and Elton John. Geffen said we were "too dangerous", and the new guy at Elektra had no idea what we were. Were we metal? Punk? He hadn't a clue. To make a long story short, we fell between the cracks, didn't get a deal, Danny split, and Geffen signed Guns 'N' Roses, who apparently were a little less threatening. Plus, Axl sounded like a ringer for Janis Joplin. We were left holding the bag. In retrospect, it seems like Danny was just looking for a good heroin connection, which he found.

"Tits and Champagne"

Jeff Drake: Anyway, the Elektra deal fell through, and that sent Sugarman scurrying away. Danny only started snooping around after the *Times* article when he learned that we were the top-drawing unsigned band in town. He thought it was a slam dunk for him 'cause he had friends at Elektra and knew they were already interested. He didn't manage anything other than to turn our major label deal into a mirage. He's still churning out *Enquirer*-type rock'n'roll tell-all books, as far as I know.

By this time, the record companies were backing off. Our reputation as doped-up decadents was becoming way too common knowledge. I ran into a friend of mine about this time, and he asked why a certain member had just left the band. I told him it was because he was too into drugs. He seemed dumbstruck."Too into drugs to be in the Joneses? He MUST be hardcore!" That about summed up our reputation at the time.

So the dust settles, Sugarman takes off, we're still the biggest draw in town, but the record companies are getting more horrified by the day. And the hair-farmers are breathing down our necks. So yeah, it's the beginning of '85. Now we're doing shows at the Troubadour. This is getting kind of scary The Troub' has long been known as a "rock'n'roll" club in the worst sense of the word. Maybe Gazzari's ("Only the best looking bands are on my stage."—Al Gazarri,the Godfather of rock'n'roll.) was worse. So we've got Poison and company opening for us, and the scene is changing. All the kids from the Valley are showing up looking like drag queens, and everything is sounding more "lowest common denominator". Then Guns 'N' Roses started taking off, and it was all over. Every band in town is saying to me that their next record was gonna sound like "Exile On Main Street", but they all sound like Judas Priest to me. I'm sorry, but I just never got it. So don't blame any of that on me.

We had been holding out for a major deal, but now the labels were treating us like lepers. We were too "dangerous". Not easy to pigeon-hole. Would the forelock tugging yokels in Peoria dig it? They apparently didn't think so. In late '85 we hooked up with a baby indie called Dr. Dream and decided we should record 'cause all the "glam bands" were getting major deals and we were not. Everybody in town was getting signed. It was like a feeding frenzy. And we were inedible.

Everything that could go wrong did go wrong with "Keeping Up With The Joneses". During the recording Paul Mars stormed out of the studio and quit the band, demanding an extra $500 to play drums because he was now also singing for L.A. Guns. The engineer and producer kept running in and out of the mic closet and spending way too much time in there. The photographer who shot the cover had apparently never seen a

camera before. The distribution of the record got hung up by legal matters, and it wasn't in stores for a year after it was recorded. This last thing was a real killer. We were getting great reviews in *Creem*, *C.M.J.*, etc., lots of radio airplay, especially on college radio, which was very influential at the time. But nobody could buy the record. This was about the time when the other Joneses were planning a mutiny to kick me out and go "more metal".

Around this time we headlined a show with the band Spinal Tap supporting. The movie was just out, no one had any idea it would be so popular yet, and the band wanted to do a show. It was great fun. They played great, and most of them partied with us backstage at the Music Machine.

I Hate the Sunset Shit, Heavy Metal Shit...

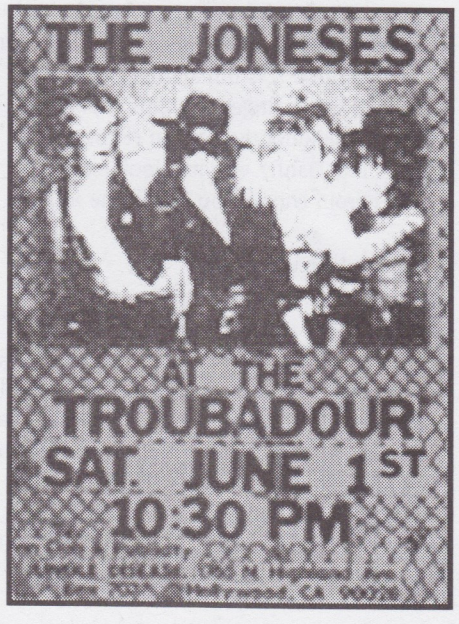
Jeff Drake: At that time, there were really no bands like us (and none since, either.) It seemed like all there was was hardcore punk, New Wave, roots, 60's revivalists, and Crampsish/Jeffrey Lee Pierce-type stuff. There was Redd Kross, but at that time they seemed more like a novelty. We did kinda have a scene going in '83-'85, but not so much because the bands played similar music. It was more because we were friends and we liked to party and play together. Those bands included the Screamin' Sirens, Tex and the Horseheads, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Blood On The Saddle, Channel 3, and I can't remember who else. Sometime in '85, bands like Guns 'N' Roses, Faster Pussycat, L.A. Guns, Poison, and the rest started coming out. We had seen these guys at our shows before some of them were even in those bands, and it was obvious they were interested in our look and attitude, if nothing else. The L.A. *Weekly* called them "Joneses Clones", but they never got it right. Especially not the music, but not even the look. Poison was too femmy, Guns 'N' Roses too lowest common denominator Hessian metal, Faster Pussycat was probably the closest, but they still had too much metal in their veins. In '86 the other Joneses thought we should try to cash in on the Sunset Strip Hair Band thing that we undeservedly got credit for starting, but I wanted none of it. At that point, the other Joneses wanted to kick me out of the band. My questions to them were: Who's gonna write your songs? Who's gonna sing your songs? Do you think anyone is gonna come see the Joneses a second time once they realize that I'm out ?

Needless to say, it never happened. By this point I had decided that I'd had enough of all this, and seeing the band I cared so much about turning into a Sunset Strip metal band would have been more than I could bear. So I retired from music.

After all, I was 25 and I hadn't had a real job in almost six years. For all intents and purposes, this was the end of the Joneses as a real band. Everything after this was pretty much "solo stuff", and my progressing drug addiction had made it impossible for me to function even as a musician. There were a couple of Joneses records after this, but they were recorded as demos and never actually intended to be released. In fact, one of the Joneses songs on "Tits and Champagne" was just me, Greg Kuehn, and Alex Gibson, and it was recorded as the theme song for a TV pilot that never happened. Anybody who ever heard that record can guess which song it is, I'm sure. So from this point on, I just did a handful of shows with an ever changing line-up, with the only consistent members being Mike "Rocko" Occhiato and Greg Kuehn. In April 1991, I was arrested for unarmed bank robbery and sentenced to three years in Federal Prison. Not much happened with the Joneses during those three years.

Debauchery...

Jeff Drake: The years between '87 and '91 were pretty bleak. The band didn't do much. The Joneses played maybe a dozen shows during this four-year period. After the "Keeping Up With The Joneses" fiasco and my premature retirement, the band never seemed to be able to regain the momentum we had once had. The line-ups during this period were excellent musically (Mike Sessa on drums, Rocko Occhiato on bass, and Jeff Moses or Johnny Nation on guitar), but my heroin addiction had gotten so severe that I was just going through the motions."Tits and Champagne" was recorded during this time. It was never meant to be released, but was recorded as a demo for RCA in New York. I had been able to keep the problem manageable for several years, but somewhere around 1988 or 1989 the wheels came off.



I had started doing heroin in 1981, and it was a wonder it took me so long. I had been looking for it for awhile, but Merced was not the place to look, apparently. (I lived in Merced from 1974-1981). I was introduced to it by an English friend of mine, and once I did it I knew that was how I wanted to feel for the rest of my life. I felt like I was born to be a junkie, and I went after it with the kind of determination and drive I wish I could channel into other areas of my life. Once I started doing it, I did it every chance I could. And the chances became more frequent all the time. People that wanted to be in the band's "inner circle" knew that heroin was the magic key. If they had no other reason to hang around, they knew they were welcome if they got me high. I wonder sometimes whether, had it not been for the drugs and brushes with the law, the Joneses would have become more popular. We sure weren't virtuosos on our instruments, and I think some people got off on us because they could live vicariously through the band. Whatever the case, the image was real. The years 1981-1991 constituted one debauched decade for me.

Whenever I was doing drugs, I never felt like I was breaking the law. Sometimes scoring got a little sketchy, and you definitely felt like you were looking for trouble, but somehow I could never figure out why it was illegal to feel good. The drug-using lifestyle will wear you out, but it doesn't have to be that way. I used to tell people that I didn't have a heroin problem, I had a money problem. Heroin should be dirt cheap. It costs almost nothing to produce. The big problem is that it's illegal. That's what led to my life of crime.

On April 12,1991, I was arrested for unarmed bank robbery. I was guilty, too. If heroin had been legal, I doubt that I ever would have become a bank robber. It just wasn't my style. Not subtle enough. When a junkie needs to get well, he may resort to

bank robbery to fix it. If heroin was legal, it would be inexpensive (theoretically), and junkies could bum spare change like drunks do. If cigarettes were illegal (and they soon will be), people would be robbing banks to but smokes. Because they would be expensive. Illegal things are expensive because somebody's taking a big risk to provide them to you. Anyway, that's my rant for today. It's been years since I've done any heroin. If it was legal, I'd be loaded right now. But because it's not, the lifestyle that accompanies it is untenable.

Back in the Saddle Again

Jeff Drake: What have I been doing since I got out of prison? Wow, it's been seven years already. Well, I reformed the Joneses briefly. Twice, actually. When I first got out, I put the band back together. It was Rocko Occhiato, Johnny Nation, Greg Kuehn, and Mike Sessa and Byron Reynolds tag teaming on drums. This was when we recorded "Anita Fix", which was never intended to be released. That version collapsed almost immediately, and I started to put together AMANDA JONES with Mandy Brix, Keith Miller, and Antijon. I enjoyed being in Amanda Jones as much or more than any other musical project I've ever been involved in. I finally got to just play guitar, write songs, and sing a little back-up. I feel much more comfortable in that role than as a lead singer. I never particularly wanted to sing, and I have no burning desire to go back to being a full-time lead singer. I did sing lead on one song on the VICE PRINCIPALS CD (Splittsville USA) and I'm gonna have to do some singing if I do a solo record, but I'm gonna try leaving singing to the singers. So I hooked up with Mandy, who I had known before she was married to Guns 'N' Roses.

We wanted to put together a band that fell somewhere between the Avengers and Blondie, and I think we pulled it off. A lot of Joneses fans didn't like Amanda Jones, but I say fuck 'em. I think my guitar playing and songwriting were better in Amanda Jones than they ever were in the Joneses. And I think I was better in the Vice Principals as well, and there are Joneses fans who didn't like that. Sometimes, I think these types of fans would only be happy if I put out 15 versions of "Pillbox" on every release. I thought Amanda Jones was a good little band. I think if we had managed to stay together a little longer, people would have known about us. The last I heard, Mandy had married, had a child, and settled down. Keith was pouring drinks on an Amtrak train, and Sean had switched to guitar playing for a band I've forgotten the name of.

The "Criminal History" CD was something I had been trying to put together for a long time. Bomp! was gonna do it back in '97, I think, and Junk was gonna do it in '99, but they both kinda choked when it came time to step up to the plate. No fault of Lou Carros at Junk, he's a good friend of mine. It was something to do with his partner. Finally, that bottom-feeding parasite John Mermis at Sympathy anted up and got it done. I'm glad that there's something out there on CD with so much stuff on it. Most of it came out before there was such a thing as CD's. It might hurt the record collectors who are into vinyl, but anybody who made a buck off any of that stuff made more than me. This CD led directly to the creation of the Vice Principals.

After the work was done on the Joneses CD, John asked what my immediate plans were. I had none, and even considered that CD to be kind of a career obit for me. He suggested a solo album, but I demurred. I had just stopped singing, and wasn't too crazy about the idea. After some friends (?) convinced me it would be a good thing, I told John I would start putting it together. I was rounding up musicians and material when I remembered a song that my brother's old band the SUICIDE KINGS used to do, "Switchblade". It wasn't on the record I produced for them, but was always one of my favorites of theirs. So I called up my brother, whom I hadn't spoken to for awhile, to ask him for a tape so I could learn the song correctly. When I asked him if he wanted to sing backups, he said he wanted to sing on more than just that song. Thus, the Vice Principals were born. I've read some reviews of the Vice Principals that claim we were the first punk rock super-group. What about LORDS OF THE NEW CHURCH? I think it's amazing what bizarre perspectives some people have. I've spoken to people who act like they're gonna have a stroke because I'm such a "legend". To tell you the truth, I very rarely feel like a legend. I thought you had to die first, anyway.

Into the Future...

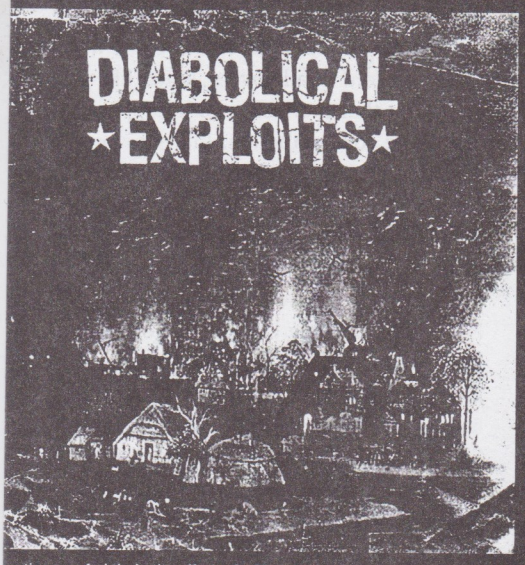
Jeff Drake: Hopefully, by mid- to late summer '01, I'll be in the studio with Greg Kuehn, Mike Occhiato, Mike Sessa, and friends from the Stitches, Superbees, Motorcycle Boy, Suicide Kings, etc. I wanted to do a record of all covers, kinda like Bryan Ferry, but that probably won't happen. I do like doing covers, though. I'm not sure how it will come out. I've been listening to all the usual suspects, as well as Oasis, Garbage, Kenickie. A lot of the stuff I listen to people probably wouldn't expect: Roxy Music, Brian Eno, Nick Lowe, Elvis Costello, Dave Edmunds, the Only Ones...It's not all hard, loud, and fast. In fact, a lot of the hard, loud, and fast stuff doesn't do a thing for me. I can't stand the MC5, and don't really like bands that try to sound like that. Same with the Stooges first two records. I like "Lust For Life" and "The Idiot" way better. And, of course, anything that even hints at heavy metal belongs in the septic tank.

During baseball season, it's hard to find time to listen to and play much music. But I do. I tend to play my guitar more when it's not in the pawn shop. My daily routine is pretty normal. I have a full-time day job working for a nail polish manufacturer, a beautiful girlfriend that I love very much. I'm broke all the time, you know, the usual. I like to go out to clubs if there is a good band or one of my friend's bands playing. I don't really drink like I used to. I like my gin and tonics, just not as often. I'm trying to quit smoking now, but that seems harder to quit than junk.

I think my main goal in music has always been to get as many people as possible to hear music. Before I wanted to be a musician, I wanted to be a disc jockey. I need to inflict my musical taste on the world. By the way: Hanoi Rocks sucked louder than a brokedown Hoover, and the Dead Boys only had one good song!

One Last Thing: "Only in the savage forest of vice can new domains of knowledge be conquered." ✢

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RECOMMENDED LISTENING:

Starvations — "A Blackout To Remember" (Revenge, 423 Bryson Springs, Costa Mesa, CA 92627). Very similar to the Gun Club (which is not to say they're lacking originality), this punk-swamp-blues-psychobilly-garage band writes cynical, morose lyrics which are a dark contrast to the bright sunshine of their Southern California home. Adding to their eclectic and unique sound is their use of slide guitar and accordian. This CD is spooky and moody, but not without humor, and it has a touch of New Orleans (both visually and musically). I love the "Curses to:" section on the back of the CD (after the thank-you list), where they include "the Coconut Teaszer and all their management". I totally agree, having had my own bad experience with that wretched club. Highlights: Great lyrics about a favorite subject, "Whiskey Summer, Gin Fall", but too bad the vocals are so buried in the mix; "Raising Nothing", more clever writing about a firstborn named Nothing whose mother is Depression; "Queen Bee's Lament", a song that reminds me of Tom Waits and the Flesh Eaters; "Church Of The Double Cross", with its street punk sing-along choruses; and the combination of blues-dirge and faster rockabilly on "Ringfinger".

The second CD from **Neko Case & Her Boyfriends** is called **"Furnace Room Lullaby"** (Bloodshot LTD, 3039 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago IL/Mint, PO Box 3613, Vancouver, BC V6B 3Y6, CANADA/ www.nekocase.com), and has an odd cover photograph of Miss Case on a grubby floor with the blank-eyed, slack-jawed expression of a corpse, which my friend Woody says is "Much too arty for a country record". Stamped with the insurgent country/No Depression label, Neko Case does have a country sound, but veers off into other territory as well. This is better than her first CD on Mint/Bloodshot, "The Virginian". Her voice on this new one is stronger and more controlled. And what an amazing voice it is — powerful, versatile, and with quite a range. Miss Case also seems amazed with the sounds that she can make, however. She could stand to exercise more subtlety, and she overuses the semi-yodel, country trademark sound that Dwight Yoakam is also fond of (but is more conservative in his use of). The songwriting (some of which seems oddly structured) and recording are both a showcase for her voice, so the instrumentation is often very sparse or relegated to low background volume. Although I am impressed with her pipes, I enjoy the songs where both the band and singer share the spotlight. I'm not sure why the slow, dreamy song "Porchlight" was included on this CD — it sounds, as my friend Stephen says, "like Sinead O'Connor" and doesn't seem to fit in with the other material; the placement also interrupts the flow of the record). Highlights: "Set Out Running", in which the full-on onslaught of Neko Case's voice can be heard, and her sheer vocal power makes this otherwise unremarkable song interesting; "Mood To Burn Bridges", an excellent rockabilly number that has more band participation and good guitar work; the jazzy-lounge "No Need To Cry", where she is appropriately restrained and shows her ability to successfully tackle different musical styles; "Thrice All American", a song about her hometown of Tacoma, WA — it has a folk sound to it and sentimental lyrics that avoid sappiness through their vibrant imagery: "The buildings are empty like ghettos of ghost towns, it gives me a chill to think what was inside, I can't seem to fathom the dark of my history, so I invented my own in Tacoma"; "We've Never Met", a tale about how a lover can become a stranger when the relationship ends, and the pain and confusion that follows; and "Whip The Blankets", an upbeat tune with more nice guitar playing.

Hop, Skip and Jump
by Devil Doll





HIT SQUAD

Photon Torpedoes — "Flesh-Eating Bacteria" 4-song 7" EP (Baby Doll, PO Box 1043 Allston, MA/Photon Torpedoes LdbLaauw@ix.netcom.com). The title song is well-executed but somewhat generic psychobilly. I like the guitar and stand-up bass...but the title/subject is just gross. "Tough Fuckin' Shit", the next track, is a G.G. Allin cover. Ugh, don't get me started on him! The obviously Cramps-influenced "He's Doin' It" has a great beat and more texture and frantic energy than any of the other songs on this record. They should write more like that, since I love the song! Finally, we have "Sinful Dwarf", named after the 1973 Vidal Raski exploitation film about a peeping, pimping dwarf. This song has a growly British psychobilly sound, but the topic is more interesting than the music.

One of the best rockabilly compilations to come my way is **"Fernwood Rockabillies"** (Various) on Stompertime Records (Phonographic Performance LTD, Ganton House 14-22 Ganton Street, London WV1 1LB, ENGLAND), the same smart folks who put out the Glen Glenn reissue that I raved about a few columns ago. This is material recorded between 1956-1965 for the Memphis, TN-based Fernwood label. The vice-president and producer for the label, Scotty Moore, is also widely known for backing up Elvis Presley in the early 1950s with Bill Black and D.J. Fontana, who later did session work for Fernwood. Highlights: "Hep Cat Baby", which has a cool, laid-back delivery by Gene Criss — legend has it this song was recorded in a kitchen and that Mr. Criss went on to be a gardener (a gain for the flowerbeds, a loss for the rest of us); the instrumental "Have Guitar, Will Travel" by the aforementioned Scotty Moore Trio — the Duane Eddy version is the one that made the charts, but this one has its charms; Another Gene Criss gem, "I Don't Know", with those hiccupping rockabilly vocals that I adore; "Love Gone", a slow, sad song with a fine tear-jerking vocal performance by Ramon Maupin; and the delirious, primitive "Rock 'N' Roll Fever", where Buzz Busby is completely convincing as he howls about the musical affliction that has possessed his body and soul. No need for a cure!

RECOMMENDED VIEWING:

"The Girl Can't Help It" (20th Century Fox, 1956). Besides being the first starring role for the fabulous Jayne Mansfield, this perfectly garish comedy also features fantastic performances by rockabilly stars Gene Vincent and Eddie Cochran, as well as the exceptional R&B group the Treniers, among others.

"Hot Rod Gang" (American International Pictures, 1958). A typical '50's B-movie, it has wooden acting and a silly plot (as well as the required amounts of cars, music, and girls). However, the appearance of Gene Vincent (performing and with a small speaking role) makes this movie worth watching. A fun dance sequence, and hot rod races through the streets of Bakersfield, also make it more interesting. ⊕

Don't be shy! Send correspondence, vinyl, & CDs to:

Devil Doll
PO Box 2307
Alameda, CA 94501
Teaserama1@aol.com



"If language is not correct, then what is said is not what is meant. If what is said is not what is meant, then what must be done remains undone. If this remains undone, morals and art will deteriorate. If justice goes astray, the people will stand about in helpless confusion. Hence there must be no arbitrariness or lack of clarity in what is said. This matters above everything."
- Confucius

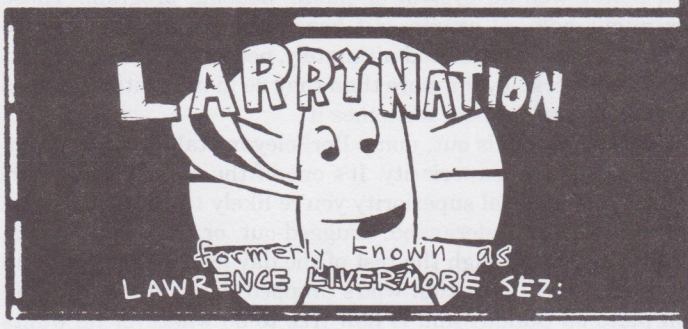
One unmistakable feature of life in Berkeley is that you're going to encounter a lot of beggars. I once got yelled at for using the word "beggar," but I couldn't understand why. If I sat in front of the supermarket all day singing, it wouldn't be out of order to call me a singer, would it? Based on your opinion of my singing, you might also call me a noisy pain in the ass, but that's neither here nor there: a singer is someone who sings and a beggar is someone who begs. And for some reason, Berkeley, California seems to have more beggars per square mile than any place in the modern industrialized world, with the possible exception of its neighbor across the Bay, San Francisco. I've never completely understood why.

It's not just a question of poverty. Though there are many poor people in and around Berkeley, there are places all over America that are far poorer and yet have few if any beggars. It might be because Berkeley's rich people, of which there are also many, are especially generous, but considering that most of Berkeley's rich are selfish yuppies who would never dream of getting out of their BMWs and SUVs to actually walk the streets, I'm not sure that explains it either.

A better explanation might be that Berkeley and San Francisco have large numbers of rich and poor people living cheek by jowl, whereas in most cities, there's more distance between them. Try begging in the Richmond or Oakland ghettoes and you'll be lucky to collect more than curious stares and muttered insults, while in Berkeley, you can attract no end of sympathy — and a good bit of money — from big-hearted liberals eager to do their good deed for the day..

This isn't a bash-the-beggars piece. No doubt some of them can be annoying — especially the ones who've become semi-permanent fixtures on certain Berkeley street corners. You can't help wondering why, if people can faithfully show up every morning and put in eight to twelve hours asking passers-by for spare change, they couldn't apply the same diligence to some sort of paying job, or at least to scamming the welfare department. But face it: someone whose quality of life has sunk to the level where he or she considers sitting on the sidewalk begging to be a reasonable career choice deserves more sympathy than scorn. Note: I said sympathy, not money. I occasionally dole out some change to people with an especially sad or convincing story — or when it looks like a reasonable alternative to getting mugged — but I stopped handing out money to most of them years ago.

What a heartless bastard, I can hear some of you say. You could afford a few bucks and not even notice it. That's true, and I could also afford to eat at fancy restaurants or go to the race track or buy an SUV, but I don't. I could afford lots of things that I don't do, I could patronize lots of businesses that I don't patronize, for the very simple reason that I don't think they're a good idea. And I don't think begging is a good idea. The beggar himself may be a tragic individual whose life has been so shattered by mishap or circumstance that he's no longer capable of making more productive choices with his time and energy, but the institution of begging — and in places like Berkeley, it has become an institution — is a terrible indictment of the kind of society we inhabit.



Most people would probably agree with that, but where they would part company would be on the causes and solutions to the problem. To doctrinaire left-wingers, beggars represent "the poor," the oppressed, marginalized victims of globalization, capitalism and corporate-dominated society. To doctrinaire right-wingers, beggars are human vermin, parasites who need to be swept from the streets, imprisoned, or killed if necessary. To doctrinaire anarchists — though they would never cop to it — beggars are useful pawns in the campaign to destabilize and destroy "the system."

The real question is how our society and culture became so debased that begging came to be seen as a normal part of urban life.

All of these views effectively dehumanize the actual people doing the begging, and none of them offers anything like a real solution. Perhaps it's because the problem hasn't been sufficiently identified. Street beggars are a symptom of a larger malaise, but those on the left who cast the beggars as hapless victims of capitalism run amok are just as guilty of oversimplification as the vindictive right-wingers who would like to see them be made to disappear by whatever means necessary. The real question is how our society and culture became so debased that begging came to be seen as a normal part of urban life. I'm not sure begging was even as widespread during the Great Depression as it is today, and I don't think anyone, no matter how extreme or anti-capitalistic his world-view, could argue that poverty today is comparable to that of the Depression era.

HIT SQUAD

There are a couple other differences between now and the Depression era. One is that in the 1930s unemployment insurance and welfare were almost non-existent; even after the cutbacks of recent years, there is in place today a social safety net far stronger than that of the Depression years. Even more to the point, begging in the 1930s was generally seen as the last possible refuge of an honest man trying to feed himself or his family; today it is increasingly accepted as a permanent way of life. No matter how starry-eyed or idealistic you are, it's hard to believe that the people who've taken up residence on the downtown streets require nothing more than a better welfare system or public housing program. Those things might help, of course, but begging is as much a lifestyle issue as an economic one. And ultimately, people beg for a living on the streets in Berkeley far more than they do in most cities because Berkeley tolerates, almost welcomes it.

When you point this out, many Berkeleyans take it as evidence of their city's moral superiority. It's one of the most cheaply-purchased senses of moral superiority you're likely to encounter: for a few coins tossed at a deranged, drugged-out, or desperate human being, you can go through the rest of the day feeling generous and smug, much like a Christian who's dropped his money in the collection plate on Sunday and is now free to do whatever he wants the rest of the week. Never mind that the guy you've supposedly "helped" will still be there tomorrow and the next day and the next day, that as long as he's begging on the streets, his life is likely to get worse, not better, and that by institutionalizing begging as legitimate economic activity, you're lowering the quality of life for nearly everyone else that lives or works in downtown Berkeley. Never mind that this solipsistic version of morality has in reality helped almost no one, that it has seen Berkeley deteriorate over the past few decades from a reasonably pleasant, reasonably priced, open-minded, and tolerant place into an over-priced, closed-minded, almost hostile place. If Berkeley really possessed any claim to moral superiority, it wouldn't have let its educational system deteriorate to the point where more than half the African-American kids who enter Berkeley High School never graduate, and only a fraction of those who do lack the skills to go on to college. If Berkeley were really the oasis of tolerance and understanding it purports to be, it wouldn't have let many of its neighborhoods deteriorate into some of the most expensive slums in the world, with a crime rate almost double that of New York City (Department of Justice Uniform Crime Statistics).

It's relative, of course. Berkeley offers many advantages besides its good weather, excellent food, and 37 movie screens. There are the bookstores, the theaters, the arts, one of the world's great universities. But about the only aspects of Berkeley that are stable or improving are those involving consumerism. If you've got the money, it's a great place to shop or eat out, or buy a million dollar home overlooking the Bay. If you're not well off enough to take advantage of those opportunities, you're a long-suffering pawn in the hands of the social scientists, politicians, criminals, and crackpots who variously see Berkeley not as a living, breathing community but as a laboratory to test revolutionary theories or a resource pool to be heedlessly exploited.

There's an unhealthy symbiosis between the former and the latter factions. Well-intentioned but misguided attempts to control

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the housing market have created an unnatural economy which encourages landlords and developers to make fortunes by kicking people out of their homes. Educational "reform" has produced a new wave of social and cultural illiteracy, unfortunately concentrated in those minority communities which are most in need of the opportunities and benefits education confers. Attempts to root out racism have degenerated into a polarized community in which almost everything has been racialized or racially balkanized. In other words, the debased quality of life in the public spaces of downtown Berkeley not only mirrors, but flows directly out of the debased quality of intellectual and political life. Just as words and values have been stood on their head and "deconstructed" into meaninglessness, so have elementary principles of civil conduct and civic responsibility been jettisoned as so much excess, useless baggage.

Speaking of which, after being so critical of Jose Palafox in previous columns, I figured I owed it to both him and myself to go hear him give a presentation at a "No More Prisons" convocation in Berkeley. I was pleasantly surprised; not only did he come across as a sincere and thoughtful young man, quite unlike the fire-breathing radical he appears as in print, but his talk, about the deaths of Mexican migrants trying to sneak across the border, was both touching and heartfelt. Of course he may have only appeared reasonable in contrast with some of the other panelists, a couple of whom were outright raving lunatics of the sort you usually see talking to lamp posts on Telegraph Avenue. Still, I was feeling a bit guilty for calling Jose "an ambassador for barbarism" in my last column. I never meant to imply that Jose himself was a barbarian, merely that his prescriptions for social and cultural revolution were a surefire recipe for a new barbarism that could destroy the best aspects of modern civilization while preserving the worst.

Any suspicions that I had been too hard on Jose vanished, however, when I read his latest column in *Maximum Rocknroll*. Therein he denounced literacy as a tool of Western imperialism and complained that the Spanish conquistadors used "the book" as one of their vital tools in introducing "colonialism" to the New World. Of course the Spanish did nothing of the sort; they couldn't introduce colonialism into the New World because it was already in full effect when they got there. (Nor, indeed, could they have overcome the existing imperial systems in the region without the willing support of groups that had been conquered.) The Inca Empire, one of the largest in the world at that time, stretched from what is now Colombia to Chile. It was propped up by military conquest, slavery, and occasional human sacrifice. And the Incas were, relatively speaking, the good guys.

Up in what is now Mexico, there were the Aztecs, a lovely people whose principal *raison d'être* was the waging of war for the purpose of capturing victims to be sacrificed to one of their many gods. Judging from the way he denounced the conquistadors, Jose presumably sees the Aztecs in a more benign light. Perhaps he would agree with Kirkpatrick Sale, who described Native Americans as peaceful, loving, and environmentally protective, and then suggested that we all live as "the original Americans — for that is what the earth demands." Of course the Aztecs had their own idea of what the earth demanded: blood, and lots of it. Here is how they celebrated the opening of a new temple in 1487:

> All was in readiness; the lines of victims were strung out for miles. Thousands of trapped human beings, milling about like cattle, awaiting their turn in the line that was about to move...Great snakeskin drums began to throb, announcing that the lines could now begin to move. The sacrificial victims were slaughtered with machine-like precision; as the knife-wielders fell exhausted, they were replaced by fresh priests who lifted the heavy blade and let it fall in a precise and measured stroke until their arms grew weary...It took but seconds to dispatch each victim. Rivulets of blood became bright red streams, washing over darkening plots like boulders in a stream. The holocaust went on unabated for 4 days and nights, with tens of thousands perishing on the slabs. Most of the sources claimed that over 80,000 were sacrificed.
>
> Another fun custom of the Aztecs was to gather up buckets of the blood obtained in such ceremonies and pour it over the food offered to honored guests at the after-slaughter banquet. Nice folks. Perhaps not the most peace-loving, though you probably can't fault them on their environmental sensitivity. All that human compost must have been extremely good for the soil.

In other parts of the Americas, there were peoples who were less violent and bloodthirsty than either the Aztecs or Incas. But given time, they too probably would have fallen under the sway of the Aztec or Inca empires, just as so many tribes already had. In other words, Europeans did not "introduce" colonialism and imperialism into the Americas, they simply took over where their Native American counterparts left off. And to be fair, for all the well-documented crimes of the European colonizers, I don't recall institutionalized human sacrifice being one of them. True, the Europeans carried on the indigenous Americans' tradition of slavery, perhaps on an even more brutal scale (indigenous American slavery was usually not racial or hereditary), but it was also liberal European thinking that first introduced a critique of, and finally brought an end to, that slavery. Perhaps it is only because indigenous peoples had no written language, but there doesn't seem to be any record from the pre-Columbian era of indigenous moral movements against slavery, human sacrifice, imperialism, or colonialism. Those all seem to have been the legacy of European liberalism and modernity, the same source which Jose apparently only credits with, in the words of Quijano, "the formation of a global racial/ethnic hierarchy."

Most of the sources claimed that over 80,000 were sacrificed.

Cataloguing the crimes and excesses of Euro-American capitalism is a legitimate occupation and one which radicals like Jose Palafox are entirely free to pursue (though I wonder how well his critiques would have been received if he'd offered them to one of the Aztec rulers). But whose interests are served by presenting an entirely one-sided and frankly dishonest account of history? You could argue, and no doubt Jose would, that Europeans did the same with Native American history and tried — literally in some cases- to erase it.

That was wrong, obviously. Much was lost as a result of the Europeans' indecent haste to superimpose Christianity onto native cultures with scant regard for what it was replacing. But what do we accomplish by turning a blind eye to the faults and failings of native culture, by romanticizing the kind of society that by any

sane standard would have to be deemed backward and barbarous? With all that's wrong in the Americas today, with all the poverty, corruption, and environmental depredation, can you honestly say we'd be better off living in a society like that of the Aztecs or the Incas? Oh, but by now they would have evolved into a much more progressive society, you might argue. Perhaps. But SO HAVE THE EUROPEANS. And since European culture was already far more advanced than native American culture 500 years ago, there's little reason to suppose that native culture, left unmolested, would suddenly have evolved more rapidly and surpassed that of the Europeans.

Am I being all Eurocentric here? Probably. I don't have much choice, do I? We wouldn't even be having this discussion if the Europeans hadn't introduced a workable written language into the Western Hemisphere. And as Palafox and numerous others have observed, the Europeans' possession of written language was as important an item in their arsenal of conquest as their horses, guns, and great sailing ships. Palafox seems to think that there is something terribly wrong with this, that attaching greater value to "the book" than to the hieroglyphic codices of the Aztecs and a few other indigenous American peoples — most had no writing system at all — is somehow racist or imperialistic. To me, it's just common sense. Alphabetic writing is more adaptable, more flexible, and ultimately more democratic.

If you're not part of the literate elite, it's unlikely that your ideas will ever be heard beyond the confines of your family or village.

For example, the Chinese developed what was possibly the world's first system of writing, a system of pictographs that evolved into ideographs (pictures capable of expressing ideas as well as things). But it was still frightfully complex to master, with the result being that only 10 to 15% of the population was able to become literate. As long as China operated as a feudal empire, this was not a problem, but when the West began making its own Great Leap Forward in the post-Gutenberg era, Europe's rapidly increasing literacy left China's older civilization in the dust. It wasn't until the Communists introduced a simplified writing system and an effective alphabetization in the mid-20th century that the Chinese finally made serious progress toward mass literacy.

Language counts, and illiteracy represents an enormous squandering of human potential: if you're not part of the literate elite, it's unlikely that your ideas will ever be heard beyond the confines of your family or village. Combine even a rudimentary knowledge of English and access to the internet, and you might be speaking to billions. Ah, but what about the quantity-vs.-quality argument? Palafox seems to believe that there is some deeper quality to the "knowledges" expressed in Aztec codices, something that alphabetic writing is not only incapable of expressing, but might even be guilty of strangling. Could this be true? Possibly. Should we then consider cave paintings or Egyptian hieroglyphs or Sumerian cuneiform writings to be of equal value as a mode of communication to that of modern English (or French or German or Spanish or Arabic or Chinese)? I don't think so.

The notion that there is some "deeper" knowledge, something beyond words, has a seductive ring to it. It was much loved by the hippies, whose drug intake made it difficult to conceptualize things in terms of words. It's been the tool of religious fundamentalists since time immemorial, because it can be used to make the preposterous plausible and turn the obviously contradictory into fodder for prayer and meditation. Now, in the postmodern era, that notion has entered the academy: the deconstructionists and poststructuralists use language to destroy language, and the ersatz radicals who follow in their wake gather up the detritus, much like the religious fundamentalists of yore, in order to turn their cockeyed theories into irrefutable "fact."

Ah, yes, speaking of fact, I must thank Jose Palafox for referring me to the "interesting and insightful critique of Larry Livermore's reactionary turn" in Tommy Strange's *The Rattlesnake: Anarchist Syndicalist Journal*. The whole magazine is interesting, albeit in the same way that a train wreck is interesting. It consists partly of reprinted writings from some of the founding fathers (and mothers) of anarchism, others from modern leftists and anarchists, and, most notably, the bizarre musings and diatribes of Tommy himself. But being only human, I naturally found the most fascinating item to be the ten pages devoted to a meticulous catalogue of my various perfidies, treasons, and — worst of all from a political fundamentalist's point of view — changes of mind. And this was only Part One! Tommy promises more of the same in the next issue.

Since Tommy has done a better job than I have of keeping track of my writing and the evolution of my thinking over the past fifteen years, I won't spoil your enjoyment by quoting any of it here. Well, all right, I will quote one bit: "Note that in years of columns I have sifted through here, [Livermore] mentions not one text, or one reference, not one historical action, not one concise milestone. Every column is all blurry gray rumination under sweeps of numb carpeting to obscure the real world." I bet you wish I'd told you that before you bothered to read all the way to the end of this column, eh? But there's a reason I'm not always assiduous with the texts and references, and I'll let Jose Palafox help explain why: "Today's intellectual architects of global apartheid continue the tradition: the Hernan Cortezes of yesterday are the Samuel Huntingtons (at Harvard), the Thomas Friedmans (New York *Times*), and the Larry Livermores (*Punk Planet*, *Hit List*) of today."

Get it, Tommy? An aspiring professor has lumped me in with some of the major intellectuals and institutions of our time (and boy, the editors of *Punk Planet* and *Hit List* will probably be pleased to see that my efforts have vaulted them into the ranks of Harvard and the New York *Times* — I'll be expecting my pay raise soon, guys). And you yourself have just devoted ten pages — with more promised — of footnoted exegesis to the collected philosophy of Larry Livermore. Dude, at this rate, I'll never have to cite to the text again: judging from all the attention you're paying me, I *am* the fucking text. ⊕

THE ALMIGHTY TOP TENS

SHIT LIST

Jeff Bale:

1) ANGELIC UPSTARTS - "2 Million Voices" CD
2) "Badsville" - film with SoCal r'n'r bands
3) HANGMEN - live at CW Saloon
4) RAMONES - expanded reissues of first 4 LPs
5) REAL McKENZIES/BRIEFS - live at CW Saloon
6) SAINTS - "I'm Stranded" CD
7) STATUS QUO - "The Technicolor Dreams of..." 2XCD
8) SUPERBEES - live at El Rio
9) V/A - "Nuggets II" 4XCD box set
10) V/A - "Psychedelic States: Florida, v. 1" CD

Alan Wright:

1) V/A - "Aliens, Psychos and Wild Things, Vol. 2" CD
2) V/A - "Stomp...Northwest Killers" CDs (3 volumes)
3) ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN - "Crystal Days" box set
4) EXCESSORIES - "Pure Pop For Punk People" CD
5) REAL KIDS - "Senseless" CD
6) CRAMPS - "1976 Demo Session" LP
7) RAMONES - expanded CD reissues of first 4 LPs
8) WHITE STRIPES - "White Blood Cells" CD
9) ROLLING STONES - "Could You Walk?" 2xCDs /"Black Box"/"Touring Party" boxsets
10) LOVE -"Forever Changes" reissue CD

Athena Dread:

1) WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?/LIFE'S HALT - live at Mission Records
2) ADVOCATE 7"
3) KRIGSHOT 7"
4) FUCK ON THE BEACH - LP
5) SMASH YOUR FACE 7"
6) LANA DAGALES 7"
7) ALLERGIC TO WHORES CD
8) SCROTUM GRINDER CD
9) CRISPUS ATTUCKS CD
10) Latin America issue of *MRR*

Jeremy Cool:

1) MAX PAYNE (Video Game)
2) BRIEFS - live at the C&W
3) SCARED OF CHAKA - "Crossing With Chainsaws" CD
4) RANDY - "Human Atom Bombs" CD
5) *Like Hell* - novel by Ben Foster
6) WANNA-BES - CD
7) REAL SWINGER - "Back From Nowhere" CD
8) GREEN DAY - "Behind the Music" on VH-1 (featuring Jeff Bale)
9) WEEZER - "Green Album" CD
10) AMERICAN STEEL - "Jagged Thoughts" CD

Mitch Cardwell:

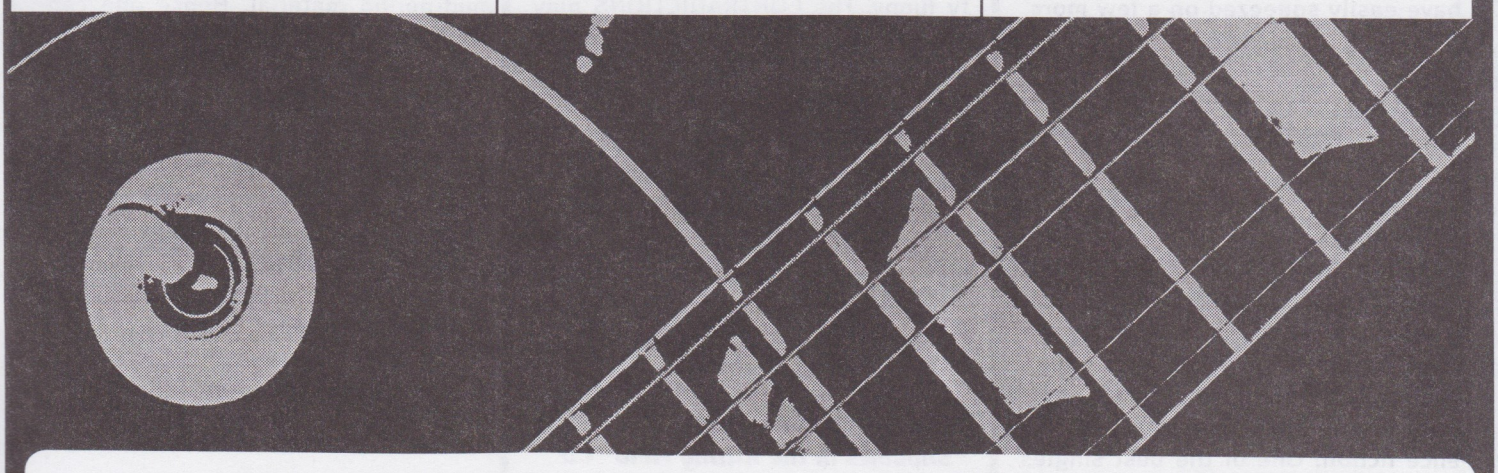
1) PAGANS - both new Crypt CDs
2) DIRTBOMBS - "Ultraglide In Black" LP
3) WHITE STRIPES - "White Blood Cells" LP
4) DETROIT COBRAS - "Life, Love and Leaving" LP
5) FLESHIES/PHANTOM LIMBS - split 7" EP
6) ANDRE WILLIAMS - "Bait and Switch" CD
7) RUBBER CITY REBELS and PINK HOLES CDs
8) HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE - "Makes Your Cock Big" 7" EP
9) THE SCREWS - "Shake Your Monkey" CD
10) MHz - "Action Figure" 7" EP

Dave Johnson:

1) JAWBREAKER - "24 Hour Revenge Therapy" CD
2) BURNING AIRLINES - "Identikit" CD
3) RANDY NEWMAN - "Bad Love" CD
4) AMERICAN STEEL - "Jagged Thoughts" CD
5) WILCO - "Summerteeth" CD
6) ZERO ZERO - "AM Gold" CD
7) ONE TIME ANGELS - "Sound of a Restless City" CD
8) AMERICAN STEEL/BLACK CAT MUSIC/ONE TIME ANGELS - Live at Café Du Nord
9) THE PATTERN (in general)
10) SLAYER - "Reign in Blood" CD

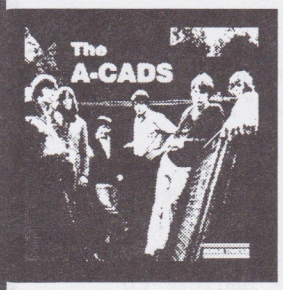
Brett Mathews

1) AMERICAN NIGHTMARE - "Background Music" CD
2) GUN MOLL - "Anger Mangement in Four Chords or Less"
3) BREAKER BREAKER
4) The fact that the Lifetime & Kid Dynamite boys are back playing together in a couple of bands (One with Dr. Dan on vox).
5) GOOD RIDDANCE - Live at Slim's 8/3
6) HIGH SCHOOL ROCKERS "Lets Kill The Reekys Tonight" 7"
7) NERVE AGENTS - "The Butterfly Collection" CD
8) CARRY ON - Live at Gilman
9) DEAD INSIDE S/T 7"
10) The HOPE Conspiracy



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SHITLIST



A-CADS
"Hungry For Love" CD
South Africa's A-CADS, a mid-60's group made up mostly of British and Scottish expatriates, produced one impressively tough and catchy R&B-influenced beat blast, "Hungry For Love", which could have been a massive hit had it been released in England. A local music school bought them powerful state-of-the-art amps and arranged tours for them, but they failed to become international stars. Still, they left behind an album's worth of guitar-shredding covers and originals, including the amazing title track. (JB)

(no label or address listed)

ADVOCATE
7"
Balls- and ovaries-out thrash with agonized screaming vocals. This is fast and non-stop from start to finish. My only complaint is that there are only three songs on this slab of vinyl; the songs are so short that they could have easily squeezed on a few more. (AD)

(Dead But Dreaming/44 Gesler Street, 3rd Floor/Providence, RI 02909)

A-FRAMES
"Neutron Bomb" 7" EP
What a great record! This disc features three really fucked-up synth-punk blasts. The A-FRAMES sound similar to LE SHOK, only more snot-drenched and damaged by way of science fiction. One of the best singles this year, hands down. Give us more! (MC)

(Dragnet, no address listed)

AFFRONT
"People Who Live In Glass Houses" CD
Riff-driven punk rock meets old school hardcore, or DAG NAST Y meets MINOR THREAT (that was a very Brian Baker-filled comment!). This CD is well done, with both good songwriting and good recording and production. I just don't know if it's the first CD I would pull out if I wanted to hear this style of music. (BAM)

(Phyte/PO Box 90363/Washington, DC 20090)



AGENT 51
"Just Keep Running" CD
Driving cartoonish punk, with hints of SOCIAL DISTORTION, RANCID, and the MISFITS. Nothing spectacular, but decent background music for sure. (RK)

(Adeline/www.adelinerecords.net)

ALL BETS OFF/THE CONTRADICTIONS
split 7"
This record was financed by selling off old A.F.I. merch on eBay, which is pretty funny. The CONTRADICTIONS play second rate pop punk, the singer's voice is annoying as hell, and with song titles like "Speed Freak" and "You're Fine and You're Mine", I doubt that I'm missing much. ALL BETS OFF play diverse styles of hardcore, some of it of the Victory label type. (AD)

(Cynic Squad/no address)

ALLERGIC TO WHORES
"Shadows in the Killing Field" CD
Living in Ohio would be enough to piss anyone off, but evidently the ALLERIGIC TO WHORES guys are directing their angst into their band. Totally raging hardcore thrash that has a bit of melody to it, but not the lame kind. It kind of reminds of JERRY'S KIDS. (AD)

(Sound Pollution/PO Box 17742/Covington, KY 41017)

AMERICAN NIGHTMARE
"Background Music" CD
Very few bands live up to their buzz, but not only do AN live up to it, they overshoot it by at least 75 feet. In an era when rage is a gimmick, these Boston bastards blast ugly, genuine indignation like hot lead from a rickety old Gatlin gun. The music will leave you as devastated as your first high school crush, and I must say, at the risk of sounding melodramatic, that the lyrics are goddamn poetic. This isn't a record, it's an experience. (STM)

(Equal Vision)



ANGELIC UPSTARTS
"2,000,000 Voices" CD
Another classic reissue from Captain Oi, plus bonus tracks. This is the transitional third album between the UPSTARTS' early anthemic working class punk and their more eclectic mid-period material. Hence one can find tough mid-tempo punk blasts (like the title track and "Kids on the Street"), more complex, melodic numbers with horns and reggae-ish beats (like "Ghost Town"), pretty Celtic ballads ("England"), and even spoken word rants ("Heath's Lament"). With amazing cuts like "Jimmy", no Jack-the-Lad punk (Oi, Bruce Roehrs!) can afford to do without this. (JB)

(Captain Oi/www.captainoi.com)

ANIMALS
"Interesting Life" CD
All of the old classic 60's ANIMALS hits performed live in the year 2000 by a band consisting of only two (hardly key) members of the classic lineup. The versions are solid and stay

true to their bluesy roots, but who really cares? This is just a last ditch effort to squeeze that last few dollars out of a band that has been dead for 30 years. Go buy one of the great old ANIMALS records instead. (JC)

(A2/no address listed)

ANDRE WILLIAMS
"Bait and Switch" CD
The Black Godfather further cements his legacy as one of the truest rockers ever with "Bait and Switch", since his classic brand of dirty soul is in full swing here. Again, he is backed by a killer band, and there are guest appearances by RONNIE SPECTOR and RUDY RAY MOORE. As he says, "Sling It, Bang It, and Give It Cab Fare Home". (MC)

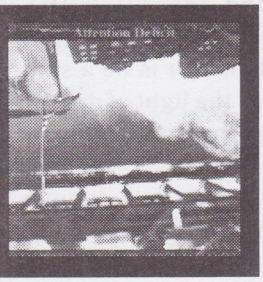
(Norton/Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10276)

ANTI-FLAG
"Underground Network" CD
Their third full-length finds the guys just as pissed, but with a much more articulate, focussed, intelligent channelling of their (entirely well-directed) anger. The music, while revelling in their signature U.K. SUBSian punk-as-fuck catchiness, is similarly tight, refined and precise. While stylistically very different, this package brings to mind the passion, power, and politics of PROPAGANDHI. (RK)

(Fat/www.fatwreck.com)

THE ATTACK
"Final Daze" CD
A fine collection by this U.K. freakbeat group recently featured on the "Nuggets 2" box. This album concentrates on material done after guitar hero JOHN DU CANN joined, and thus misses some early tracks like their freakbeat version of "Try It." Still, there's plenty of groovy tunes (like "Magic In The Air", "Strange House", and "Go Your Way") with crashing guitars, soaring vocals, loud drums, and that great freakbeat bass sound that so many of these groups were able to achieve. (AW)

(Angel Air/www.angelair.com)



ATTENTION DEFICIT
"Adventures in Laissez-Faire Economics" CD
At first glance, with the title, arty-farty graphics and Karl Marx quote, I was expecting pretentious crap. It actually turned out to be a quirky, enjoyable electronica/pop-punk hybrid. They've got more in common with ATOM & HIS PACKAGE than TRICKY, and most of the samples are pretty mickey mouse, but this is definitely an interesting listen. (JER)

(Mutant Pop/5010 NW Shasta/Corvalis, OR 97330)

BACKSIDE
"Ten Million Strong and Growing" CD
Here is some fast, catchy hardcore, along the lines of A.F.I. Young punks with lots of attitude and a lot to say about the world, including songs about drinkin' and hatin' America. They're fast and they're pissed, but sadly a little run of the mill. (LD)

(El Pocho Loco/3838 Jackson Street, Suite D/Riverside, CA 92503)



BACKSTABBERS INC.
"While You Were Sleeping" CD EP
Brutal high-energy thrash-style hardcore at its finest. Screamy gruff vocals
over some mighty fine guitar and drum work. I look forward to more from BACKSTABBERS INC. in the future. (BAM)

(Trash Art/PO Box 725/Providence, RI 02901)

BACKYARD BABIES
"Making Enemies Is Good" CD
Yet another collection of kick-ass riffola and guitar heroics from rock'n'roll guitar hero incarnate Dregen and his gang of Scandinavian droogs. That they still manage to find so many permutations in the dirty-assed territory between primetime RAMONES, HANOI ROCKS, and MOTÖRHEAD is a tribute to their sheer visceral knowledge of what makes guitar rock action really work. Add to this some neat tunes, great guttural singing, and songs packed with some neat twists and turns served up with a ridiculous surfeit of energy, and you've got a band who know how to celebrate the power of r'n'r. (JR)

(RCA)

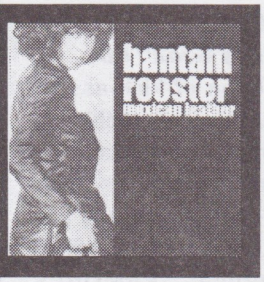
BALLBUSTERS
"People's Republic of Rock'N'Roll" CD
This one gets a mixed review. The vast majority of this CD is straight bar-rock, pretty unexciting, but there are some great JOHNNY THUNDERS-style sprinkles that work really well and "The Crush" even has a cool, glammy sound. Build off those, and it's a winner. (MC)

(Vicious Kitten/GPO Box 20/Canberra ACT 2601/AUSTRALIA)

BANNER OF HOPE
"Bar Room Brawl" CD
Reminiscent of BLANKS 77 and the DEVOTCHKAS, this band shoves the message and fun of punk rock, as sung by a woman, in your face. The lyrics are cool and socially conscious, but also heavily dipped in alcohol. "I've got faith in punk/Don't you have faith in me?" is a great line and brings to mind the ever-present issue of women being accepted as equals in the punk community. (LD)

SHITLIST

(ADD/Banner of Hope/37B Hussa Street/Lowe Level/Linden, NJ 07036)



BANTAM ROOSTER
"Mexican Leather/ Summer In Hamtramck" 7"
These guys never drop a dud. Like all other ROOSTER releases, this contains dirty and primal rock-'n'roll that you can't help but flip for. They get better with every release, and the Jim Diamond production pretty much ensures that it's great. (MC)

(Big Neck/PO Box 8144/Reston, VA 20195)

BEAUTYS
"Thing Of Beauty" CD
Fresh off of Mutant Pop, and now part of the Cheetah's Records family, the BEAUTYS are back with more well-crafted, female-fronted pop punk tunes about booze, sex, and small town life. Contains ex-members of the QUEERS and the SMEERS, and brings the REZILLOS to mind. (BAM)

(Cheetah's/PO Box 4442/Berkeley, CA 94704)

BERLIN PROJECT
"Transition Radio" CD EP
I wanted to like this, really I did. But it's too squeaky clean and the band photo makes these guys look like total dorks! I'd like to see how they measure up live. They're trying way too hard to be "professional", so I've got a feeling they're more suitable for *Spin* than *Hit List*. And I don't mean that as a compliment. (LD)

(Try Again/630 Plum Industrial Park/Pittsburg, PA 15239)

BILLY SYNDROME
"Now" CD
Homemade freakout punk that falls somewhere between the MURDER CITY DEVILS and the BUTTHOLE SURFERS. Twisted and garagey, it sounds like this band (or is he a solo artist?) hasn't seen the light of day for awhile. Well worth the trip. (JC)

(Slutfish/237 Bedford Avenue #A2/Brooklyn, NY 11211)

BLOCKO
"Wager" 7"
This is limited edition (300 made), weird (one-sided) and sounding like JAWBREAKER (well thought out and calculated pop punk songs with rough vocals). These are a few of my favorite things. (BAM)

(Boss Tunage/PO Box 19550/London SW11 1FG/ENGLAND)

BODYJAR
"How It Works" CD
Australian college rock collides with ALL. Apparently they're huge in their native Oz. Think of a supersmooth BLINK 182, or ALL shorn totally of any rough edges. If big major label-sounding MTV-friendly production floats your boat, you might want to dock with this one. Otherwise, swim for your life! (RK)

(Nitro, licensed from EMI Australia)

BOMBSHELL
"Bwisit" LP
Originally recorded in 1993, but resurrected for your enjoyment - and to add one more record to your "bands from Florida" collection. The songs are a little rough around the edges, and the production's kinda shabby, but underneath the music is pretty damn interesting. They remind me a little of the DESCENDENTS, but with darker lyrics. (LD)

(Allied/PO Box 460683/San Francisco, CA 94146)

BORIS THE SPRINKLER
"Is Gay!" CD
Another stunning effort from Rev Norb and his men. It starts off strong with one of Norb's most entertaining rants and is full of all the wholesome goodness we have come to expect from the band. Most of it consists of great recommendable pogo punk, though there are a few weak songs ("Train Song Train" was especially painful). (JC)

(Go Kart/PO Box 20, Prince Street Station/New York, NY 10012)



BRASS-KNUCKLE BOYS
"American Bastard" CD
Tough-guy "No Coast Working Class Street Rock'N'Roll". All the songs deal with familiar subjects for this kinda stuff, and some of 'em were even written in jail! The odd cover selections include HANOI ROCKS, KRIS KRISTOFFERSON, and SKREWDRIVER...these guys get around. (MC)

(Haunted Town/1658 N. Milwaukee Avenue #169/Chicago, IL 60647)

BREAKER BREAKER
"Y2XI-Demo" 7"
This band was surprisingly impressive. It contains straightedge-influenced hardcore that reminded me a lot of the GORILLA BISCUTS, which is never a bad thing. This release, as well as their much anticipated forthcoming CD, are on Bridge 9 Records, which seems to be the hot new HC label to watch. (BAM)

(Bridge 9/PO Box 990052/Boston, MA 02199)

BULEMICS (with TEXAS TERRI)
"Product Of America" 7"
The BULEMICS do a great bar anthem on the A-side, and back up TEXAS

TERRI on a decent version of JOHNNY THUNDERS' "Tie Me Up". (BAM)

(Scarey/PO Box 7150/Waco, TX 76714)



BUSINESS
"No Mercy For You" CD
Rarely does bland idiocy sound so appealing. The BUSINESS have dumbed down their lyrics to mean absolutely nothing, but can still appear vaguely "right-on" - at least for the lads all in it together. The music, while lacking some of their glorious melodies of twenty years ago, is a very passable attempt at catchy, chorus-laden "street-punk". If you can stomach the taste of sugar-coating, these "legends" won't dissapoint. (RK)

(Burning Heart, dist. by Epitaph)



BUZZSAWYER
"s/t" 7" EP
Four sloppy punk tunes from the hell-hole known as North Carolina. The lead track, "Disgrace Jones", is the hit here, since it rocks in a NEW BOMB TURKS way. The remaining three tunes are lackluster in comparison to the great opening, but are still OK. (MC)

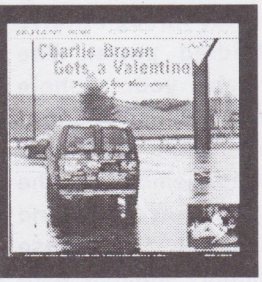
(Regal Beegle/PO Box 13/Frostburg, MD 21532)

CANNONBALLS/CARBONAS
split CD
I got a lot of Spanish stuff for review this time around, and it's all pretty damn good. Both of these bands are from Spain, but they definitely sound a lot like some of the Japanese punk/garage bands. The CANNONBALLS have a rougher, more garagey sound, while the CARBONAS are slightly poppy, but both sound fine to me. (MC)

(Punch/Apdo. 60167/28080 Madrid/SPAIN)

CATHETERS
"I Can't Stay This Way Forever" 7"
These kids rock really hard, and the packaging contains their logo and a tiger's head embossed black on black, with the four corners of the back of the 7" folding into each other. The disc features two songs with huge production, loud guitars, and aggressive vocals, both of which are along the lines of early ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN or the MURDER CITY DEVILS' better material. (BAM)

(Kapow/PO Box 1287/Lake Forest, CA 92630)



CHARLIE BROWN GETS A VALENTINE
"Save It For The Van" CD
Though labelled as "emo", I'd call CHARLIE BROWN straightahead pop punk with shades of ALL, MONSULA, and maybe JAWBREAKER. There's no question that these guys are good musicians, and I'll keep an optimistic eye out for future releases, but this disc didn't really grab me. (JER)

(Mutant Pop/5010 NW Shasta/Corvalis, OR 97330)

CHEETAH CHROME
"Dead Boy Alive In Detroit" CD
An obvious favorite of mine. One of the amazing things is that he made it all the way to 2001 and seems to be going strong. This is a live recording from 1999, on which the CHEETAH rips through an assortment of classic DEAD BOYS tunes, solo tracks, and a hot version of ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS' "So Cold". He tops it all off with a bonus studio track from 79. He doesn't seem to have lost much of his piss and vinegar. (JC)

(D.U.I./PO Box 46073/Mt. Clemens, MI 48046)

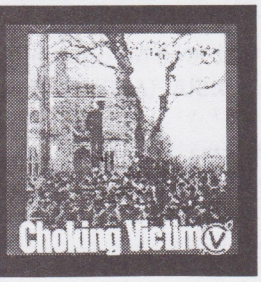


CHELSEA
"The BBC Punk Sessions" CD
I once wrote that CHELSEA only occasionally managed to come up with a great tune. I must have been hallucinating when I uttered that remark, 'cause I've been relistening to their early LPs lately and have been hearing plenty of fine songs. This BBC collection features five BBC sessions by the band, ranging from the thud punk of their earliest days to the more tuneful punk from 78 to the more rock-oriented later material. The sound is uniformly heavy, and it's hard to argue with terrific songs like "Right to Work", "Urban Kids", "I'm On Fire", or "Trouble is the Day". (JB)

(Captain Oi/www.captainoi.com)

CHINGALEROS
"Bravo Karate Gospel" CD
Nineteen tunes in 30 minutes, all of 'em wild and raw punk rock. It appears that Martin Savage of the BLACKS isn't with this line-up, but the AEROBITCH folks are still present. This fucking rocks, so you definitely need it. (MC)

(Punch/Apdo. 60167/28080 Madrid/SPAIN)



CHOKING VICTIM
"Crack Rock Steady/ Squata's Paradise" CD
A CD of the two EPs by these spirited, shambolic, crusty, ska-punk NYC squatters.

SHITLIST

Eight tracks of political bile, venom, and the odd good tune. All recorded back in the glory (?) days of the mid-90s. (RK)

(Tent City/101 W. 23rd Street, Box 2341/New York, NY 10011)

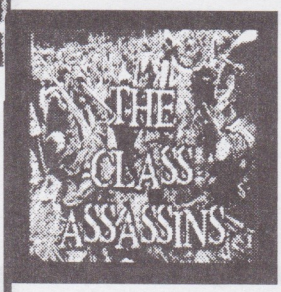


CINECYDE
"Magnetic Attraction, Hypnotic Repulsion" CD
If someone had told me that late 70's Detroit-area punk rawk band CINECYDE would be putting out a new record that would be glued to my turntable, I may not have believed it. But the proof is in the pudding, as this new LP is filled with hard rockin' punk blasts with more bad attitude than one might expect from middle-aged farts. Fine songs like "I Will Not Obey" and "The Good's Gone Bad" prove, again, that once a rock'n'roller, always a rock'n'roller. Very impressive. (JB)

(Tremor/403 Forest/Royal Oak, MI 48067)

CLASH
"Live At The Roundhouse In '76" LP
A lo-fi but still quite listenable LP of a very early CLASH show, when Keith Levene was still in the band. It's one of the few places where you can hear discarded tunes like "I Know What You Do", "I Don't Want Your Money", "Going To The Disco", and others. Also included is "I'm So Bored With You", which was recorded before they got bored with the U.S.A. (AW)

(Brigade Rosse/Piazza Renato Curco P38/50101 Firenze/ITALY)



CLASS ASSASSINS
s/t 7"
Three great mid-tempo and melodic-as-hell streetpunk anthems. It's comparable to mid-period SKREWDRIVER (musically only, of course) or early ONE MAN ARMY. I for one am looking forward to hearing more. (BAM)

(Soap And Spikes/561 Brant St./PO Box 85021 / Burlington, Ontario/CANADA L7R 4K3)

COLUMBIAN NECKTIES
s/t CD
Jumpin' Jesus on a friggin' pogostick, the great Danes are back, crashing and burning their way through twelve tunes with unbridled power. The NECKTIES slam-bang your asshole like Rodimus Prime on PCP, but unfortunately they omitted a couple of faves from their killer demo (like "The Bitch Is Back", "Whiskey Jive", and "Too Naked to Care"). Still, these guys are so whompin', stompin' bad-ass that they make the HOOKERS sound like the BEE GEES. (TS)

(Sounds Of Subterranea)

COMIN CORRECT
"In Memory Of" CD
RickTaLife's side project has finally blossomed into a damn impressive hardcore band. A hell of a lot heavier than their previous work, and with a lot more care put into the production, this release should establish CC as a real contender in the HC game. Old school hardcore sensibilities are meshed with latter day brutality, so fans of pounding mid-90's hardcore will appreciate this album. (STM)

(Triple Crown/West 57th Street, PMB 472/New York, NY 10019)



CONTENDER
"Scenic Overlook" CD-EP
Six tracks of well-executed modern college emo that's more AT THE DRIVE IN or PROMISE RING than JAWBREAKER. Dripping with obscure but immaculately performed angst. Pretty good, if you like this sort of thing. (RK)

(Not Bad/www.notbadrecords.sexypage.net)

COUNTDOWN TO OBLIVION/THEY LIVE
split 7"
The three songs from Canada's COUNTDOWN TO OBLIVION are mid-tempo to fast metallic hardcore, sounding like something that could be on Relapse. The girl singer from THEY LIVE sounds like she's being stabbed relentlessly, which kind of freaks me out. The dual male/female vocals do a lot for this band, and their songs are more hardcore but still a bit metallic. (AD)

(Ugly Pop/2 Bloor St. West, Suite 100/Box 477/Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3E2/CANADA)

CRAMPS
"1976 Demo Session" LP
This stuff, which features early skin-pounder Miriam Linna (of Norton Records fame), was originally released as a pretty lo-fi double EP set years ago. This release features better sound and a cool cover to boot (pun intended), and contains real primitive versions of later CRAMPS classics that every caveman should own! (AW)

(no label)

CRAMPS
"Persecuted Prophets" LP
This is culled from the same live Peppermint Lounge show as the clas-

REVIEWS

sic "Smell of Female" release. It includes the rare tune "Lowdown" on the live side, and a side of rehearsals and demos, including four songs recorded with GUN CLUB drummer Terry Graham. Pretty nice packaging, too. (AW)

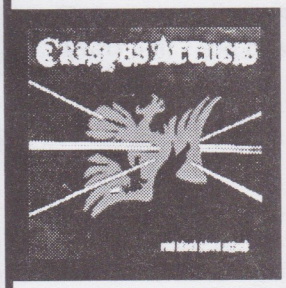
(no label or address listed)

CRAMPS
"Songs The Lord Might've Taught Us" LP
An alternate version of the first CRAMPS LP from a test pressing. A completely different mix, and the substitution of a never-released version of "Drug Train" for "TV Set", makes this a worthwhile addition to CRAMPS collector's collections! (AW)

(no label)

CRIMSON SHADOWS
"Out Of Our Minds" CD
An amazing collection of snotty fuzz- and farfisa-fueled Swedish garage punk from the mid-80s. It contains all their known studio tracks on one convenient silver coaster, and includes future members of the WYLDE MAMMOTHS and STOMACH MOUTHS, two other primo 80s garage revival acts. (AW)

(Inbetweens/PO Box 411141/San Francisco, CA 94141)



CRISPUS ATTUCKS
"Red Black Blood Attack" CD
One of the best bands to come out of the East Coast in a long time, CRISPUS ATTUCKS deliver another onslaught of thrash that doesn't wane or slow down at all throughout the fifteen songs on this album. I was a big fan of last year's "Destroy the Teacher" album, but this great album takes it to the next level. (AD)

(Soda Jerk/PO Box 4056/Boulder, CO 80306)



D.SAILORS
"Mind Dressing" CD
A fairly fresh-sounding batch of modern Euro-melodic hardcore with an exotic twist. There's something always a tad different when them foreigners get ahold of that SoCal sound, in the process moving it out slightly of the MTV/Gap punk orbit. RANDY would be a reasonable point of reference. (RK)

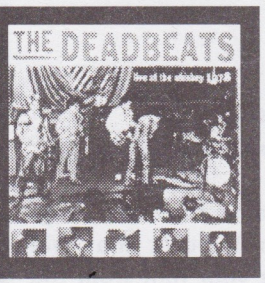
(Vitaminepillen/www.vitaminepillen-records.de)

DAS BOOT/SWEET J.A.P.
split 7" EP
A really good split featuring two Japanese punk bands, although SWEET J.A.P. are from Minneapolis. Each band does two tunes, all of which rock in a speedy REGISTRATORS way. Works for me. Fans of Japanese punk/garage should not pass it up. (MC)

(Nice & Neat/PO Box 14177/Minneapolis, MN 55414)

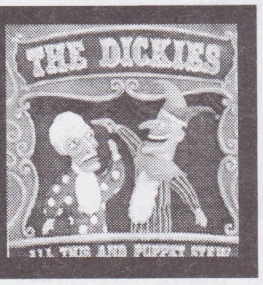
DEAD INSIDE
s/t 7"
This was one hell of a surprise. Well-played, heavy-as-hell BLACK FLAG riff rock, combined with emo, hardcore-style choruses. Dark and quite heavy. (BAM)

(Land Of Treason/PO Box 2454/Dorchester, Dorset DT2 8YT/ENGLAND)



DEADBEATS
"Live At The Whiskey 1978" CD
This one has been out for quite some time. The DEADBEATS were a great, theatrical punk band from L.A., and this CD captures them at their most crazed, assaulting the audience with their unique brand of "punk jazz". Also tacked on are two great studio tunes cut before the Dangerhouse single. A must for art-punk fans. (MC)

(www.sympathyrecords.com)



DICKIES
"All This And Puppet Stew" CD
A good five years in the making, and well worth the torturous wait. This is a tremendous return to form that ranks right up there with their first two LPs. The signature catchy punk tunes, laden with guitar hooks, vocal harmonies, and an engaging social conscience. Brilliant. One of the few really old bands who are still producing the goods. (RK)

(Fat/www.fatwreck.com)



DIGGER
"Trainwreck" CD
Six tracks of pure pop-punk bliss. Meaty, beaty, big and bouncy. These guys have always been up there with the likes of ALL, and this is no dissapointment. I just wish there were more songs. (RK)

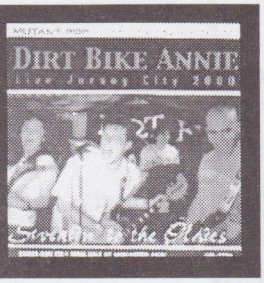
(Hopeless/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA

SHITLIST

91409)

DIMESTORE HALOS
"Dumb Radio/No Place Like Home" 7"
Two great new tracks from this long-standing punk'n'roll outfit that will have you tapping your foot from the first listen. According to Tim Stegall, "Dumb Radio" is the classic track that the HALOS always had in 'em. Melodic but nonetheless way rockin'. (BAM)

(Telegraph Company/telegraphcompany.com)



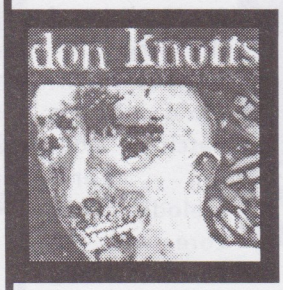
DIRT BIKE ANNIE
"Sweatin, to the Oldies" CD
I really dig D.B.A., and can't say enough good things about 'em. If you like the bubblegum stuff, you really can't go wrong here. Great board recording, decent sound. Check out their debut CD on Mutant Pop while you're at it. (JER)

(Mutant Pop/5010 NW Shasta/Corvalis, OR 97330)



DIRTBOMBS
"Ultraglide In Black" CD
This is the best fucking album in ages! Detroit's premiere two-drummer combo give us an album full of amazing covers (and one original). The selections are top-notch: STEVIE WONDER, MARVIN GAYE, CURTIS MAYFIELD, and many more bashed through the fuzzed-out DIRTBOMBS filter. The result is soulful, very danceable (fuckable, even), and 100% great rock'n'roll. Jaw-dropping. (MC)

(In The Red/118 W.Magnolia Blvd./PO Box 208/ Burbank, CA 91506)



DON KNOTTS
"A Black Day For Mayberry" 7"
You would think that with a band name and an EP title like this that you'd be confronted with some mindless pop punk. Imagine my surprise when the needle dropped onto a brutal screaming hardcore song that was only 10 seconds long. All twelve songs are along the same thrashy lines, though most are longer. (BAM)

(Friction/PO Box 6605/Grand Rapids, MI 49506)

DOUGLAS
"Phase 2:" CD
This band has a big, full sound that just goes nowhere. They seem to be popular overseas, but I don't get. Bland and boring. This seems like it was made for the masses, not the discerning rock and roll few. (JC)

(23:59/32 Splott Road/Cardiff CF24 2DA/WALES)

DRUNKEN CHOLOS
"Livin' La Vida Loco" CD EP
In case you didn't know it, this is the original line-up of the QUEERS blasting out a handfull of fucked-up old school punk rock tunes. Both snottier and more aggressive than the last few QUEERS records, it's is a load of un-P.C. fun. (JC)

(Hopeless/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409)

ENEMIES/PITCH BLACK
split CD
Six songs each from two different bands that show that the East Bay punk scene is still alive and well. Both bands play straightforward and dark punk rock with enough riffs to rock out to, yet not too many as to turn your stomach. The ENEMIES tend to lean a little more towards the CRIMP-SHRINE/early RANCID end, while PITCH BLACK are more of an early 80's skate punk band, filled with tons of darkness. (BAM)

(Lookout!/3264 Adeline/Berkeley, CA 94703)

EX MODELS
"Other Mathematics" CD
Here are thirteen spastic and brilliant songs about sex, television, and the evil nature of today's fashion. Their music reminds me of the CARS and DEVO. It's really visceral New Wave, with lots of changes and rhythms to get you jumping for sure. Essential. (LD)

(Ace Fu/PO Box 3388/Hoboken, NJ 07030)



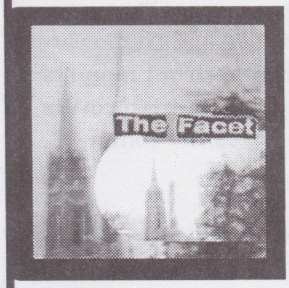
EXCESSORIES
"Pure Pop For Punk People" CD
A fantastic CD of ultra-catchy powerpop by a group led by guitarist/singer MELANIE COFFEE, formerly of SLUTS FOR HIRE, the ALTER EGOS, and OUTSIDE INSIDE. Also featured is are hubbie RICH COFFEE and JANET HOUSDEN of REDD KROSS and SUPERKOOLS fame. The whole CD rocks and pops like crazy! (AW)

(Sympathy)

EVILS
"7" CD
A top-notch homemade punk rock and roll CD, which sounds like Gene Simmons from KISS singing for an underground punk band. "Black Boots and Attitude" seems to sum up where they are coming from. This shows potential, and I for one am

going to try and hunt them down live. (JC)

(www.rockandrollsf.com/evils.html)



THE FACET
"Adult Comedy" CD
This is very "Berkeley in the 90s", sound-wise, as SCREW 32 came to mind on first listen. Driving punk that knows the importance of a good breakdown, is melodic at times, but is still grimy. It never falls into the dismal abyss of pop-punk, so AT THE DRIVE-IN and AMERICAN STEEL fans may dig this. (STM)

(Not Bad/PO BOX 2014/Arvada, CO 80001)

FAIRLANES
"Welcome To Nowhere" CD
A solid collection of sparking pop punk/indie rock. This band allways comes up with a great sound and big fat hooks. If you're a fan you'll not be let down, and if you haven't checked them out already maybe you should. (JC)

(Suburban Home/PO Box 40757/Denver, CO 80204)

FEDERATION X/FLESHIES split 7" EP
Make a face like Billy Idol, stick your fist in the air, and rock out with local faves the FLESHIES! Two great songs you won't want to miss! FEDERATION X deliver almost New Wave-inspired punk with wandering guitars and FUGAZI rhythms. A great collection. (LD)

(Molasses Manifesto/505 32nd Street #107/PMB 190/Bellingham, WA 98225)

FIELDS OF FIRE
"Keep It Alive" CD
This rules! Remember all the hardcore punk from the early 80s that was inspired by life, the times, and above all skateboarding? You either need to discover it for the first time or re-explore it with this recent grand tour of the sound. BLACK FLAG, AGGRESSION, J.F.A., and 7 SECONDS all come to mind. (BAM)

(Phyte/PO Box 90363/Washington, DC 20090)



59 TIMES THE PAIN
"Calling The Public" CD
These guys have really changed for the better. Gone are the old gruff pissed hardcore stylings. They've morphed into a full on rock band, as in "Give Em Enough Rope"-era CLASH or perhaps a cleaner LAZY COWGIRLS. Y'know, AMERICAN HEARTBREAK-style handclaps, melodies, and slicked back hair. (RK)

(Burning Heart, dist. by Epitaph)

FIRESIDE
"Hello Kids" CD
This is a compilation of FIRESIDE's best from their multi-album and 7" career. If you've never heard them before, let me clue you in. These four Swedish lads pound out post-hardcore rock - call it what you will - better than a lot of bands I've heard. They have amazing intensity and energy, which is exactly what you'd expect from a Crank band. (LD)

(Crank/1223 Wilshire Blvd #823/Santa Monica, CA 90403)

FIVE DAY WEEK STRAW PEOPLE CD
This was what the ATTACK became for a very brief period when they were pegged to record a sort of freakbeat rock opera. Done in only a few hours, this is surprisingly solid – heavier than the ATTACK, but enjoyable nonetheless. It's no "SF Sorrow" or "Tommy", but is still an interesting collection of thematically-linked tunes. As a bonus, some ATTACK material fills out the CD, although oddly all of it is on the ATTACK release on the same label! (AW)

(Angel Air/www.angelair.com)

FLAKES
"Wanna' Meet The Flakes" 7"
The second single by one of the Bay Area's best bands, featuring world famous booger-eater Russell Quan. This is really great, bouncy, 60's-ish rock'n'roll that sounds like an amped-up REAL KIDS. They've been killing us live for quite some time, so the rest of you should check 'em out. (MC)

(Lipstick/1154 Powell Street/Oakland, CA 94608)



FLAMING SIDEBURNS
"Hallelujah Rock'n'Rollah" CD
Scandanavian "action rock" bands seem to be a dime a dozen these days, but the FLAMING SIDEBURNS stand out with this release. They have a distinctive 70's glammy sound, but they also pile on some serious 60's garage flavor. This CD is good enough for me to lift my ban on this kinda shit. (MC)

(Bad Afro/www.badafro.dk)

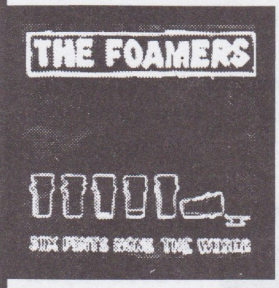
FLASH EXPRESS
"Who Stole The Soul?" 7"
By the sound of this slab, the FLASH EXPRESS seem to have nabbed every ounce of soul in sight, since the songs have that great Crypt/Estrus-like rage going. The title track practically jumps off the vinyl and smacks you. Raging, speedy and raw. (MC)

(Revenge/5835 Harold Way #203/Hollywood, CA 90028)

SHITLIST

FLESHIES/PHANTOM LIMBS
split 7" EP
Two of the Bay Area's best newish bands together on one record. The PHANTOM LIMBS go all out with their brand of keyboard creepiness, while the FLESHIES offer up their usual wild East Bay punk. Both bands have albums coming this summer, so this is a great sneak preview. (MC)

(S.P.A.M./PO Box 21588/El Sobrante, CA 94820)



FOAMERS
"Six Pints None the Wiser" CD
A mish-mash of pub rock, Oi, and vintage QUEERS, with a little ska thrown in. I think these guys are Limeys, but there's no info on the CD, so I can only guess. Not bad, a little strange maybe, but not bad. (JER)

(Tent City/no address listed)



THE FORGOTTEN
"...Ask No Questions" CD
Eight new blasts of mid-paced punk that would sound very much at home in the British spikes, studs and leather scene of the early 80s. If bands like RIOT SQUAD, the DESTRUCTORS, or early GBH ring a bell, you'll be in the right zone. Well played, with a bottom-end sound and a couple of guitar solos thrown in for good measure. (RK)

(Knock-Out/www.knock-out.de)

FUCK ON THE BEACH
"Endless Summer" LP
The long-awaited follow up to F.O.T.B.'s "Power Violence Forever" album. This Tokyo trio hasn't slowed down at all – they're still playing their trademark thrash with tortured vocals, although this release sounds like it is more influenced by classic Japanese hardcore like the still-together and much-worshipped GAUZE. If you liked them the first time around, you'll definitely enjoy their new offering. (AD)

(Slap A Ham/PO Box 7337/Alhambra, CA 91802)

FUTURO INCIERTO
"Confetti" CD
SoCal melodic hardcore is alive and well...in Peru! Well-played, well-produced, some nifty tunes and vocal harmonies...and virtually all in Spanish. Well worth checking out, especially if you are looking for something a little different in an overpopulated genre. (RK)

(www.futuroincertio.itgo.com)

FUZZTONES
"Live In Tel Aviv" CD
Further live mayhem, this time from a particularly insane show in Israel in 1992. More demented originals and fuzzed-out covers of songs by groups like the BEES, MOVING SIDEWALKS, SPARKLES, WE THE PEOPLE, MAX FROST & THE TROOPERS, COUNT 5, and, of course, the SONICS. (AW)

(Sin/www.fuzztones.net)

FUZZTONES
"Live It Italy" CD
A fine document, circa 1988, of this legendary band playing a selection of originals and fuzzed-out covers of songs by groups like the SONICS, LOLLIPOP SHOPPE, GONN, TROGGS, CRAMPS, and KENNY & THE KASUALS. All of them are done at maximum intensity. Dig! (AW)

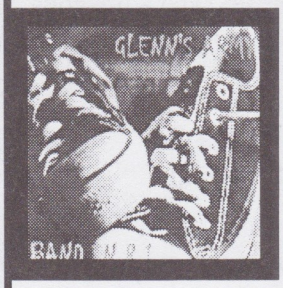
(Sin/www.fuzztones.net)

GENERAL FOODZ
"Sick Of The World" LP
I knew next to nothing about these guys except for "(You Didn't Have To) Be So Funny" which was on a "Killed By Death" comp ages ago. That song is featured in both live and studio versions, along with other cool nuggets like "Horniest Girl" and crazed covers of "Love Potion #9" and "Johnny B. Goode". (AW)

(Rave Up/Via Montecuccoli 13/00176 Roma/ITALY)

GIMMIES
"Get It Right Now" 7" EP
Screaming Apple Records unleashes another cool Japanese band. The title track has a cool DEVIL DOGS feel to it, while the two songs on the flip sound a little like "Supershitty"-era HELLACOPTERS. A different sound than most Japanese stuff, but it still rocks. (MC)

(Screaming Apple/
Dustemichstrasse14/50939
Koln/GERMANY)



GLEN'S ARMY
"Band in R.I." CD
This sounds exactly like you'd expect a CD with a pair of Chuck Taylors on the cover to sound. That's not a bad thing. Oh, kudos on successfully working a French play reference into a punk song. (JER)

(8 Roger Williams Court/Portsmouth, RI 02871)

GOOD MORNING
"Iconoclasm" 7"
It's a bad sign when you're listening to a record and can't figure out what speed it should be on. I'm going to go with the 33 speed because the vocals start to get Chipmunks-ish when

played faster, although the music sounds better at 45. Itarts out quirky and then gets a bit faster, but then the next song is ska-sounding, which is just not cool. There's something about this band that makes me want to like them, but I don't. (AD)

(Good Morning/427 W. 5th Street/Winona, MN 55987)

GROWTH OF ALLIANCE
"s/t" CD EP
These Bay Area folks play the same brand of funky alternative/metal that is currently saturating mainstream radio. That said, the six songs on this release are well-played, well-produced, and energetic. If you are into this sound, which no one here at *Hit List* is, it might be for you. (MC)

(growthofalliance@yahoo.com)

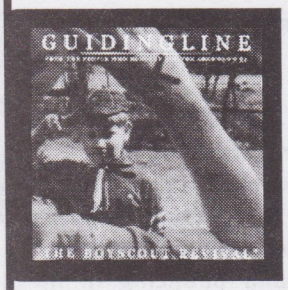


GRRRLSCOUTS
"Tonight" CD-R
This is second-rate WEASEL worship played by teenagers who picked an awful name and can't write good lyrics, and there are much better bands doing this kind of thing (TEEN IDOLS, CONNIE DUNGS.) SCREECHING WEASEL is a great band, and there's nothing wrong with wanting to sound like them, but what makes them great isn't RAMONES riffs but Ben's ability to tell a story or convey emotion within the span of a two-minute punk song. (JER)

(Mutant Pop/5010 NW Shasta/Corvalis, OR 97330)

GUESS WHO
"This Time Long Ago" double CD
Kind of a mixed-bag collection of early GUESS WHO that bridges the gap between the Chad Allen-led combo and the band of "These Eyes" and "American Woman" fame. There are some killer fuzz-pounders like "It's My Pride", "Croyez-moi", and "Summertime Blues", as well as forays into folk-rock and psychedelia with "Flying On The Ground Is Wrong", "Sitar Saga", and "Shadows Cross The Shadows". But I could have done without the wimpy ballads and the early version of "These Eyes", which I've never really liked anyways. (AW)

(Ranbach Music/no address listed)



GUIDINGLINE
"The Boyscout Revival" 7"
Six songs of attacking 87-style hardcore, with lyrics dealing with animal cruelty and animal rights, straight edge, "positivity", and self-importance. Even so, this is well done. (BAM)

(Third Party/21 Nancy Lane/Amherst, NY 14228)

GUILTY PLEASURES
"Trash Bag/Cruel And Unusual" 7"
Another cool trash punk record of the quality that we've come to expect from Sack O' Shit. This is a muddy recording with lots of cool leads and snotty vocals, and the band is probably a drunken spectacle live. Nothing you haven't heard before, but still worth checking out. (MC)

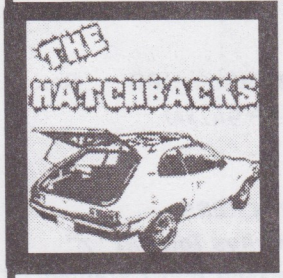
(Sack O' Shit/PO Box 308/Kankakee, IL 60901)

GUNMOLL
"Anger Management In Four Chords Or Less" CD
This could be the perfect album that JAWBREAKER recorded in-between "Unfun" and "Bivouac" but never released. It has the exact same style and sound, albeit with brilliant new songs. Attention all fans of JAWBREAKER, LEATHERFACE, and DOGS ON ICE: this has great gruff vocals over power pop-infused punk rock, with the emphasis on rock. Fetch!! (BAM)

(No Idea/PO Box 14636/Gainesville, FL 32604)

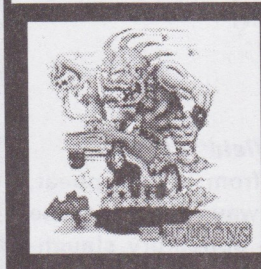
HALF JAPANESE
"Hello" CD
Some people absolutely worship this band, whereas I think that they're pretty cool. Quirky singer/ songwriter/ experamentalist Jad Fair and his cronies break out another big batch of indie pop tunes. They are a cross between the VELVET UNDERGROUND and THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS, if you're inclined to walk that way. (JC)

(Alternative Tentacles/PO Box 419092/San Francisco, CA 94141)



HATCHBACKS
"s/t" 7" EP
I'm getting the impression that Texas liquor stores also sell guitars. How else can you explain the amount of quality Texas punk rock? The HATCHBACKS fall into this category, and sound like a bluesy version of the MOTARDS. Four good tunes to help battle the dust and heat. (MC)

(Turkey Baster/PO Box 222059/Dallas, TX 75222)



HELLIONS
"s/t" CD
More from the HELLIONS, an entire CD filled with hate and soaked in beer. The band features ex-members of SPEEDEALER, HAGFISH, and GWAR, and this album ncludes a nice cover of BLACK FLAG's "Rise Above". Try not to break anything. (MC)

SHITLIST

(www.hellorecords.com)

HELLIONS
"Technikiller Punkorama" 7"EP
Pretty cool punkcore from TexASS. Four tunes driven by bad attitude and toughguy vocals. They can all probably drink their weight in booze. (MC)

(Turkey Baster/PO Box 222059/Dallas, TX 75222)

HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE
"Makes Your Cock Big" 7" EP
The first U.S. release by these amazing, insane Swedes. Everything about this record rocks - six incredibly fast and mean songs that come dangerously close to actually making your cock big. If you haven't checked out H.F.O.S. yet, you are fucking up big time. (MC)

(RockNRoll Blitzkrieg/PO Box 11906/Berkeley, CA 94712)

HIGH SCHOOL ROCKERS
"Lets Kill The Reekys Tonight" 7"
Jeff Bale's still pissed that I grabbed this 7" before he saw it. This might be the rock and roll gem of the issue. Four upbeat garage rock anthems. Imagine if you will, some of the best BRIEFS songs being dragged through the Rip Off Records sound factory. Trashy as hell. All four songs could be A-sides. (BAM)

(URU/Svedelivsuag 16-S/611 38 Nykoping/SWEDEN)

HI-STANDARD
"Love Is A Battlefield" CD EP
Four new tracks from these upbeat, always happy, always on, Japanese pop-punkers. The obligatory slaughter of an American "classic" is included (this time it's "Can't Help Falling In Love"). With these guys, even when it's snowing outside, it's always summer in their hearts. (RK)

(Fat/www.fatwreck.com)

HOLLY GOLIGHTLY
"Singles Round-up" CD
This CD serves as the perfect introduction to Ms. HOLLY's work. She's released quite a few records, and this collects many of her singles. Extremely well-crafted pop, with a fair amount of rock thrown in. She's got it going on, so you might want to check her out live. (MC)

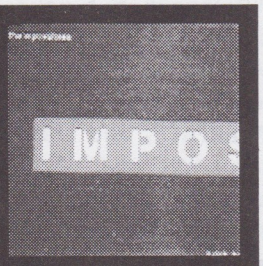
(www.damagedgoods.co.uk)

HOWLIN' ANDY HOUND
"The Electric Dreams Of..." CD
Fantastic bluesy /garage punk. ANDY HOUND does a fair amount of howling, and these eleven tunes will have you stomping and bouncing in no time. Includes an excellent cover of the LOLLIPOP SHOPPE's classic, "You Must Be A Witch".
(MC)

(Mod Holland Enterprises/modholland@hotmail.com)

IGGY POP
"Beat 'Em Up" CD
If in his last album ("Avenue B") IGGY was getting all acoustic and contemplative on our asses, then this is a rightous switch back to cranked guitars. With lots of shouting and a hint of neo-sport metal tantrums, the album is an attempt to shoehorn the great r'n'r trouper into the Nu Metal gonzoid rock party that he probably has as good a claim on as anyone. "Beat 'Em Up" is a tad mushy, production-wise, but in the murk there is the usual quotient of four or five great tunes. (JR)

(Virgin)



IMPOSSIBLES
"Brick Bomb" CD EP
They start out sounding like themselves on "Disintegration (is the best album ever)", which is debatable, and then break into the FUGAZI-sounding "Get it + Got it + Good". They stay in boring college rock mode for the rest of the disc, and overall the whole thing's just sort of bland. (JER)

(Fueled By Ramen/PO Box 12563/Gainesville, FL 32604)



INSPECTION 12
"In Recovery" CD
Silky smooth guitar pop, as only those who have been brought up on a steady diet of melodic hardcore can provide. A fine effort, marred only by thanks to God. I guess they still have a ways to go in the recovery program. (RK)

(Honest Don's/ www.honestdons.com)

INVISIBLE MEN
"Come Get Some" CD
As expected from any Dionysus release, this is some fantastic garage punk. Great tunes, semi-fuzzy, all rock. The band contains a few BOMBORAS and GHASTLY ONES. Need another reason to check this out? I didn't think so. (MC)

(Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

JESSE HECTOR & THE GATECRASHERS
"Keep On Moving" 7" EP
A totally cool 4-song EP by one of the grandfathers of UK punk, and he's been at it since 1961!. This release eems to draw from a lot of different sources, as there are R&B, pub-rock, and Mod overtones present in all of the tunes. You get three whoop-ass original rockers and a blazing version of "Summertime Blues". (MC)

(Rockin' House/PO Box 12705/

Reading, PA 19612)



KAITO
"You've Seen Us...You Must Have Seen Us..." CD
Female-fronted pop with a fair amount of noise. It seems to be a perfect blend of both, as they are sure to please the pop and indie crowds in one swoop. All you indie-rock sweater kids ought to grab this. (MC)

(Devil In The Woods/PO Box 579168/Modesto, CA 95357)

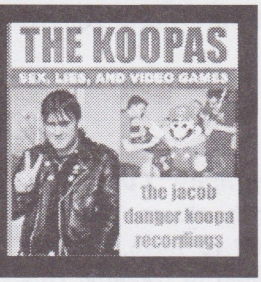
KING ADORA
"Vibrate You" CD
With a celebration of sleaze and a nod to the glam racket, the well-made up Brit boys cut their debut album. KING ADORA have grabbed a pretty significant following with their powerful twisted guitar pop, which musically leans pretty close to the PIXIES for its stop/start dynamics and intense soaring choruses. It's their interest in the twisted soundscapes and an electronic undertow that pull KING ADORA away from being just another bunch of panda-eyed wannabes, and with a good tune and a neat brattish command of snotty pop excess, their debut serves them well. (JR)

(Superior Quality Recordings/PO Box 30859/London W12 7GH/ENGLAND)



KIRBY GRIPS
"The Cherry Stem Concertos" CD
Three lovely ladies playing some charming guitar pop. It's not terribly exciting, but a solid listen regardless. This band is no longer the shambolic garage outfit they used to be. (MC)

(www.sympathyrecords.com)

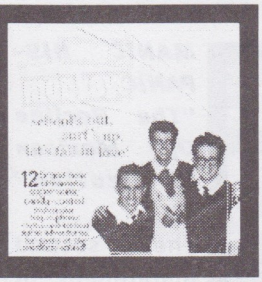


KOOPAS
"Sex, Lies, and Video Games" CD
There's some serious SCREECHING WEASEL damage on display here, which in this day and age is a decidedly mixed blessing. But their garagey production, RAMONES-y wall of guitar sound, and juvenile snottiness lift the KOOPAS far above today's hordes of generic pop-punk bands. Most of the songs on here are pretty catchy, too, so if you're looking for some exuberant, non-commercialized poppy punk fix you needn't look any further. (JB)

(Smelly Menace/PO Box 1182/Port Neches, TX 77651)

KRIGSHOT
"Öch Hotet Kvarstar" 7"
Holy shit! This is fast and furious thrash from Sweden, so you know it's great! Can you say MOB 47? KRIGSHOT features ex-members of NASUM and MEANWHILE. (AD)

(Sound Pollution/PO Box 17742/Covington, KY 41017)



KUNG FU MONKEYS
"School's Out, Surf's Up, Let's Fall In Love" CD
Fun, 50's-sounding surfy pop rock, somewhere between BEATNIK TERMITES and YOUNG FRESH FELLOWS. Ex-members of EGGHEAD can be found in this band, so if you're familiar with them you won't find any surprises. Enjoyable. (JER)

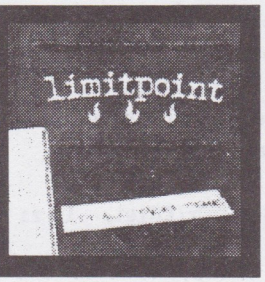
(Mutant Pop/5010 NW Shasta/Corvalis, OR 97330)

LANA DAGALES
7"
Heavy, punishing hardcore thrash from this Oakland bass and drums two-piece. Six songs on a 7" piece of vinyl is always a good indicator, and this certainly lives up to what I'd seen live from this band. (AD)

(Boredom Noise/PO Box 11351/Oakland, CA 94611)

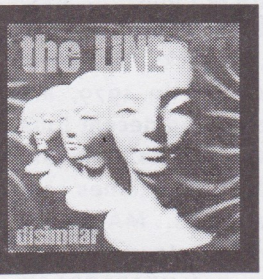
LES BLACK'S AMAZING PINK HOLES
"We're Glad We Are What We Are REVISITED" CD
The PINK HOLES were around in the 80s and played some phenomenal rock'n'roll that sounds similar to the CRAMPS. Composed of studio and live material, this CD collects their original album as well as 9 previously-unreleased tracks. A great re-issue that you shouldn't pass up. (MC)

(Smog Veil/774 Mays #10, PMB 454/Incline Village, NV 89451)



LIMITPOINT
"It All Takes Time" CD
Generic, by-the-numbers Fat Wreck type stuff that sounds a lot, A LOT, like the ATARIS. From the pictures in the CD, you'd think they were already rock stars. Just wishful thinking, I guess. (JER)

(1520 Diamond Avenue So./Pasadena, CA 91030)



LINE
"Disimilar" CD
Not just the title, but the whole of this CD is full of (presumably unintentional) hilarious gram-

SHITLIST

matical and spelling errors. If only the music was half as engaging, wittingly or otherwise. A collection of badly put together attempts at various punk and rock styles, none of which work. (RK)

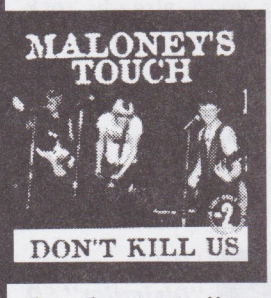
(Volcom Entertainment)

LINK PROTRUDI & THE JAYMEN
"Hashish" CD
From Rudi Protrudi's tape vaults of evil comes some previously unreleased session by his instro band from 1996. A definite Middle Eastern exotic sound meets surf can be found on tunes like "Surfin' The Nile", "Beyond The Veil", and "Visions of Ishtar". Coòl version of "Miserlou", also. (AW)

(Sin/www.fuzztones.net)

LOVE JUNK
"Tribulations" CD
A very American-sounding English band who are quite reminiscent of a late 80's indie rock band. I could easily see them opening up for someone like SOUL ASYLUM or DINOSAUR JR. A very listenable record with some real strong songwriting. (JC)

(Crackle/PO Box 7/Otlet, LS21 1YB/ENGLAND)



MALONEYS TOUCH
"Don't Kill Us" 7"
Released as a 7" in the "American Lost Punk Rock Gems" series, the three studio tracks contained herein were recorded in 1979, and there's also a demo of a decent tune. It's very indicative of its time and place of origin, NYC, and comes complete with keyboards. MALONEYS TOUCH crank 'em out along the lines of the STOOGES and HEARTBREAKERS. (BAM)

(Rave Up/Via Montecuccoli/00176 Roma/ITALY)

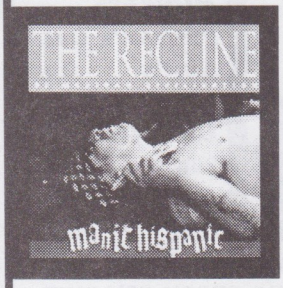
MAN AFRAID
"Complete Discography" CD
Cool throaty emo/hardcore. This is a band that seemed to have a lot of potential, but ended in tragedy. This CD features everything they ever recorded, which was only available before on various comps and EPs, and has extensive history with lyrics, photos and graphics. (JC)

(Half Mast/PO Box 8344/Minneapolis, MN 55408)



MAN WITHOUT PLAN
"I Feel Badly" CD
Screamy, semi-melodic emo hardcore with occasional leanings toward speed metal. I'm not really the one who should be reviewing this, but it's not bad. Includes a cool cover of the POLICE's "Walking on the Moon." (JER)

(Creep/PMB 220 252 E Market Street/West Chester, PA 19382)



MANIC HISPANIC
"The Recline Of Mexican Civilization" CD
The second installment of flawlessly-executed punk covers, with a distinctly Chicano flavor. MANIC H take all your punk and hardcore favorites, alter the lyrics suitably, add a dash of flaming hot sauce, and bring you such classics as "Mommy's Little Cholo", "If The Vatos Are United", "Bored With You Esse", and nine other charged barrio anthems. A work of pure genius. (RK)

(BYO/www.byorecords.com)

ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES
"Blow In The Wind" CD
This band is making it cool to like the classics that you always wanted to like. You know the drill: a punk rock all-star band (NOFX, FOO FIGHTERS, SWINGIN, UTTERS, LAGWAGON, etc.) go in and do a bunch of old covers. The first album walked you through the 1970s, while the second re-wrote Broadway. This time around it's 13 hits from the 60s. Fast, perfectly-played, well-produced powerful pop punk, with the addition of riffs from bands such as the CLASH, FANG, and the RAMONES. (BAM)

(Fat/PO Box 193690/San Francisco, CA 94119)



MEDIA WHORES
"1984" b/w "Cult of the Psychic Fetus" 7"
"1984" is the best tune I've heard by these guys, a fantastic power-pop workout in the tradition of the SHOES. The "goth-a-billy" flipside must be a joke. Stick with power-pop, guys, you do it very well. (MC)

(Break-Up/PO Box 15372/Columbus, OH 43215)



MESSI IN CROCE
"Non è ancora finita" CD
A fine example of primitive Oi, Italian-style. This means that the guitar sound is plenty raw, the vocals are nice and gruff, the songs are mid-tempo, and there are some cool singalong choruses (e.g., on "Lotta di Klasse"), for all of which we can probably thank the late, great NABAT. With titles like "Oi! Oi! Skinhead" and

REVIEWS

"Padroni delle Strade", it's not too hard to guess where they're coming from. (JB)

(Hangover/Viale G. D'Annunzio 9/20123 Milano/ITALY)

MHz
"Action Figure" 7" EP
I've been waiting for this since I heard their Christmas tune on that Flying Bomb comp. This is one of the best 7"ers this year. MHz produces an amazing and noisy punk/New Wave jumble that rocks beginning to end. Can't wait to hear what these guys do for an album. (MC)

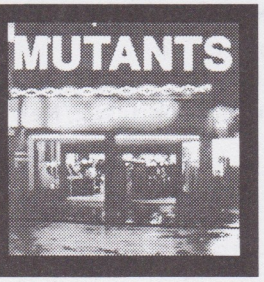
(Flying Bomb/PO Box 971038/Ypsilanti, MI 48197)

THE MIGHTY JOHN WAYNES
"Kill That Girl" 7" EP
By the look and sound of things, these folks really wanna be on Rip Off Records (they even "rip off" the logo a bit). They've got the sound down great, as the four songs here remind me of the BRIDES. Worth seeking out. (MC)
(Record Records, no address)



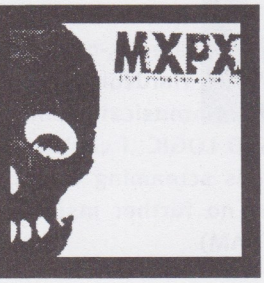
MURPHY'S LAW
"The Party's Over" CD
This is another classic platter of Jimmy and company's classic fun fun fun NYHC, the perfect melding of punk and hardcore. If even one percent of the bands out there had the integrity of MURPHY'S LAW, this world would be a much better place. If your hardcore doesn,t have to involve Satan, buy this. (STM)

(www. artemisrecords.com)



MUTANTS
"Fun Terminal" CD
The MUTANTS were a bunch of drunk punks who played slightly quirky pop songs, which caused many outside observers to wrongly dismiss them as "New Wave". Not only did they come up with lots of really good numbers that were hella fun to listen to, like "New Drug", "Insect Lounge", "Twisted Thing", and "Give and Take", but they also put on scads of memorable out-of-control live shows, thanks primarily to their bizarre antics of singers, Fritz, Sally, and Sue. White Noise has done the world a favor with this reissue. (JB)

(White Noise/537 SE Ash Street, suite 400/Portland, OR 97214)



MXPX
"The Renaissance" CD EP
As much as I want to, I don't really hate this band. It seems by their multiple piercings and tattoos that they're trying to ditch their former "cleancut" image, and god never pops up in the lyrics, but I just can't get the oxymoronic phrase "Christian Punk Band" out of my head. If you don't care about that kind of thing, they're not bad at the GREEN DAY pop-punk thing. (JER)

(Fat/PO Box 193690/San Francisco, CA 94119)

MYSTERY ADDICTS
"Unluck and Shame" CD
Twelve 77 punk/glam tunes, all featuring the proper amounts of slop and trash. This is as solid as it comes. Fans of the TRASH BRATS and DIME-STORE HALOES should especially take note. (MC)
(Mystery Addicts/PO Box 4004/Dayton, OH 45410)



NAKED RAY-GUN
"Free Shit!" CD
A live CD culled from their last two farewell shows, recorded in Chicago in November 1997. 22 glorious tracks, spanning the majority of their glorious career. If you're already a fan you'll need this, and if you're not hunt it down and discover what true legends are made of. (RK)

(Haunted Town/www.hauntedtown-records.com)

NECESSARY EVILS
"Thrill Pill/Twist, Grind, Rock 'n' Burn" 7"
Slap this one on the turntable and you'll instantly feel like you've smoked way too much pot and maybe thrown some acid in for good measure. The NECESSARY EVILS present two mind-numbing rock'n'roll tracks that will leave you asking yourself this question: Why me?! (LD)

(Crypt/1409 W. Magnolia/Burbank, CA 91506)



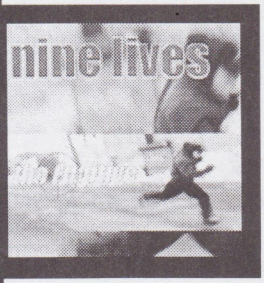
NERVE AGENTS
"The Butterfly Collection" CD
Here we go again. This band is everything - MISFITS, CRAMPS, CRO-MAGS, YOUTH OF TODAY, and most importantly, NERVE AGENTS. In your face anthemic horror punk, played better than anyone else has ever done. I would recommend this or any of their other records. (BAM)

SHITLIST

(Hellcat/2798 Sunset Blvd./Los Angeles, CA 90026)

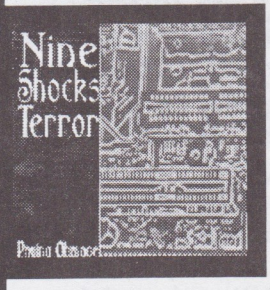
NERVEBREAKERS
"Hijack The Radio" LP
Best known for their classic "My Girlfriend Is A Rock", this fab LP collects up that great tune, plus some singles and live tracks. It's all rocking stuff, my faves being "Why Am I So Flipped?" and their cover of the TROGGS' "Strange Movies". (AW)

(Rave Up/Via Montecuccoli 13/00176 Roma/ITALY)



NINE LIVES
"The Fugitive" CD
I hate to describe this as post-hardcore, because that tends to mean self-indulgent art students making bad, "important" indie rock. The band contains members of BLACKTRIAN JACK, and their album represents everything that's good about post-hardcore: melodic, insightful, and as catchy as velcro. Imagine the GORILLA BISCUITS all grown up. (STM)

(Too Damn Hype/PO Box 15793/Philadelphia, PA 19103)

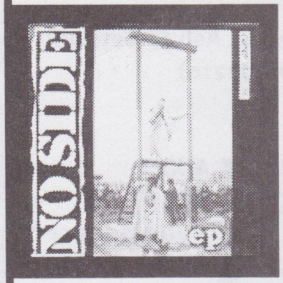


NINE SHOCKS TERROR
"Paying Ohmage" CD
I'm sure that the BORN AGAINST comparison has been used before for this band. This is a natural evolution of the faster, angrier L.A. bands such as the CIRCLE JERKS. This band's songs are ugly in the best possible way, and the guitarist has chops that most kids could only pray they possessed. If you want a record that will claw out your eyes, buy this one. (STM)

(Sound Pollution/PO Box 17742/New York, NY 41017)

NJ BLOODLINE
"Faceless" CD
This is toughguy hardcore with enough balls to throw a little eccentricity into the mix. Growling, screaming, some rapping, it's all in there. Sometimes fast and sometimes slow, somewhere between LEEWAY and E TOWN CONCRETE. May be an acquired taste for some. (STM)

(Too Damn Hype/PO Box 15793/Philadelphia, PA 19103)



NO SIDE
"EP" 7"
This is a collection of NO SIDES compilation tracks from the 95-98 era. Hardcore punk, musically similar to OPPRESSED LOGIC. I can't tell what the singer is screaming about, so there will be no further insights into the lyrics. (BAM)

(Acme/PO Box 441/Dracut, MA 01826)



OIL
"Definition Delta" CD
A less arty FUGAZI, with some of the balls of a youth crew. Instantly head-nodding, the music is energetic and the vocals are passionate. SHADES APART, IGNITE, and a more radio-friendly TRIPFACE would all be decent comparisons. (STM)

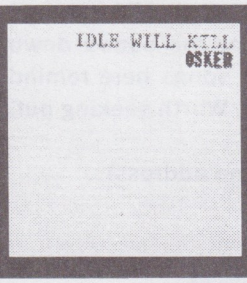
(www.oiltheband.com)

ONE PERFECT CRIME
"Angst For The Memories" CD
Uptempo skate-rock, deftly played. Throughout all four songs, they were able tostay pretty fresh and interesting, and the CD title is perfectly appropriate. (JC)

(Poopskin/220 Sechrist Flat Road/Felton, PA 17322)

ONE TIME ANGELS
"Sound Of A Restless City" CD
Amazing pop-influenced East Bay rock, yet it's so much more. I wouldn't be surprised to see O.T.A. conjure up a cult fanbase like that of JAWBREAKER, with some of the same fans. Cool gruff vocals, great riff-ridden hook-y rock, insightful lyrics, and enough diversity to keep your attention throughout a full length. (BAM)

(Adeline/5337 College #318/Oakland, CA 94618)



OSKER
"Idle Will Kill" CD
I dunno why Epitaph claim that this is their most hated band. Spirited, jagged pop-punk. Imagine the catchier FIFTEEN songs with a half-decent singer, or perhaps a more muscular, speedier J-CHURCH. (RK)

(Epitaph/2798 Sunset Blvd./Los Angeles, CA 90026)

THE OTHERS
"Yellow, Purple & Green" LP
Italy's finest garage combo teams up with garage legend CRAIG MOORE of GONN fame on the first side to rework GONN songs and other 60's covers to great effect. Side two features them backing RUDI PROTRUDI of the FUZZTONES on more 60's covers, as well as his 70's powerpop band TINA PEEL's "Penis Between Us." Fab cover, detailed liner notes, and great sounds! (AW)

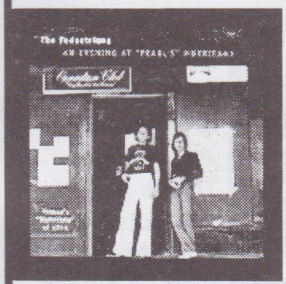
(Misty Lane/L.A. Pacucci 66/00168 Roma/ITALY)

OTHER SIDE
"In A Haunted House" CD
Another cool 80's band, these guys were Danish and specialized in slightly psych-tinged folk-rock and folk-punk. They sort of straddle that line between the BYRDS and the BIRDS, if you will. It's pretty rockin' stuff, especially the title track and "Hanover Row." (AW)

(Inbetweens/PO Box 411141/San Francisco, CA 94141)

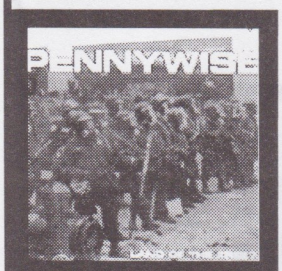
OVERTHHHROW/WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
"Livin' La Vida Loca" split CD
I'm not sure how this split came to be since OVERTHHHROW were a Spanish band from the 1980s, but whoever thought up teaming these two bands had a great idea. OVERTHHHROW played crossover metal thrash, and I don't like it when the singer actually "sings." WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? are a Bay Area supergroup made up of umpteen "ex members of" people, but they truly stand out on their own with their circle pit reviving hardcore thrash and positive message. (AD)

(Soulforce/M.L.P./Apartado de Correos 18199/28080 Madrid/SPAIN)



PEDESTRIANS
"An Evening At 'Pearl's' Hurricane" CD
The PEDESTRIANS were a teen punk combo from Tucson, circa 1979. This live release was recorded at what is considered to be the first real punk show in Tucson. Aside from a few originals, it's pretty much all standard punk covers: RAMONES, STOOGES, CLASH. Still, it's a great document of a time and place where things were starting to happen. (MC)

(Bacchus Archives/PO Box 1975/Burbank CD 91507)



PENNYWISE
"Land Of The Free?" CD
Another PENNYWISE album, and it's another winner. They have the glory days BAD RELIGION sound down to perfection, and the layered vocals are a treat for the ears. This latest offering has the added bonus of having a much more political and pissed lyrical leaning. Perhaps their best record to date. (RK)

(Epitaph/2798 Sunset Blvd/Los Angeles, CA 90026)



PERFECT DAZE
"Five Year Scratch" CD
This CD is a compilation of material recorded by this punk outfit from Ipswich between 1986 and 1989, which was not exactly a fecund era for punk music. Their music definitely falls into the pop-punk category, but the guitars are plenty loud enough and the songs are somewhat more complex than the norm for this genre. A few tracks even rock pretty hard (like "Start Back Over"), but the compilers left off some of the band's best cuts (like "Luv Ya Till the Bomb Drops"). (JB)

(Boss Tuneage/PO Box 19550/London SW11 1FG/ENGLAND)

PHANTOM LIMBS
s/t 7" EP
Raw keyboard punk that sounds like circus music for the criminally insane. They have one of the coolest sounds to come out of the Bay Area in a long Time; it's absolutely deranged, dark, screamy, and great. You need this. (MC)

(Atakra Productions/ www.atakra.com)

PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS
"Fuck With Fire" CD
This is complicated. They have the distinctive and well thought out songwriting of HOT WATER MUSIC and SMALL BROWN BIKE, yet they're both more emo way more hardcore, all the while maintaining the intensity and urgency of early BLACK FLAG. This is a brilliant record, so I would say it's well worth your $10 to check out. (BAM)

(No Idea/PO Box 14636/Gainesville, FL 32604)

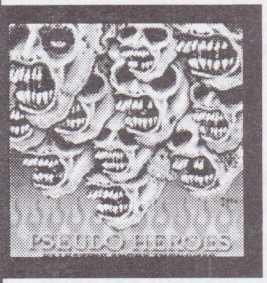
POPSTERS
"Everything I Want" CD
Now this is the kind of pop-punk with a touch of emo that I really go for. The guitars are fast, the vocals offer a lot of singalongs, and everything is played with a tear in the eye. These boys from Italy, who do a great cover of the DESCENDANTS' "Silly Girl" (one of my faves), have got something good going here. (LD)

(Stardumb/PO Box 21145/3001 AC Rotterdam/HOLLAND)

POWERHOUSE
"What Lies Ahead" CD
At a time when hardcore has lost its way and is going through a major identity crisis, these Oakland heavyweights return to remind us what it's all about. This band is a monument to the true spirit of pure hardcore – it neither gets stale rehashing the past or loses its focus by delving into flash-in-the-pan trends.. A bonecrushing masterpiece that doesn't need to rip off SLAYER to feel hard. (STM)

(Resurrection AD)

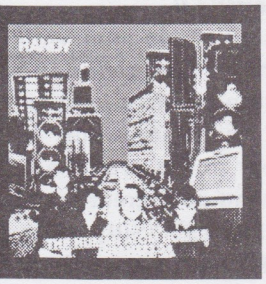
SHITLIST



PSEUDO HEROES "Betraying Angry Thoughts" CD

Radio-friendly open chords make this band stand a head above most of the melodic-pop-punk pack. This could be the DOUGHBOYS at their best, or some of the less rockish DOWN BY LAW tunes, and a nice sense of melody and that glorious guitar sound propel this fine CD. Sunshine music for when it's raining outside. (RK)

(Theologian/PO Box 1070/Hermosa Beach, CA 90254)



RANDY "The Human Atom Bombs" CD

Another quality album from Sweden's kings of commie punk. The sound ranges from BUZZCOCKS-style rockers to Fat Wreckish melodic punk. Some of the tunes have an INTERNATIONAL) NOISE CONSPIRACY vibe, which is cool. If you dig politics in your rock, you couldn't do much better. (MC)

(Burning Heart/2798 Sunset Blvd./Los Angeles, CA 90026)

RATOS DE PORÃO "Guerra Civil Canibal" CD

There's no truth to the "getting older=getting slower" theory where this band is concerned. R.D.P. have been churning out the hardcore goods since the early 1980s, and you gotta give them props for lasting so long and not compromising their unrelentingly aggressive hardcore style. Their influence can be heard in many of today's contemporary Latin American bands. (AD)

(Munster/Apdo. 18107/28080 Madrid/SPAIN)



REAL KIDS "Senseless" CD

Who doesn't love the REAL KIDS? Thanks to Norton, we have another live album recorded in 1982, this one featuring an entire set complete with their legendary originals and equally awesome cover selections. There's even a 10-minute version of "All Kindsa Girls". Need I say more? (MC)

(Norton/Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10276)

REAL McKENZIES "Clash of of the Tartans" CD

Yearning for the days of Olde Long Syne, when a man could go down the pub to sing with the lads over many a pint of lukewarm dark brown ale after another fruitful day of milking sheep and throwing logs of timber around or whatever the hell it is that Highlanders do, here comes a bunch of kilt-clad Canucks who claim to be the Great Defenders Of The Scottish Realm. Speaking as a gonzo Celt-hatin' lowlander, I'm tempted to say that these must be some severely confused individuals. But whenever the REAL McKENZIES start kicking arse, which is pretty much all the time, the results are stunning. (TS)

(Fat)



REAL SWINGER "Back From Nowhere" CD

Awesome Lookout-lovin' pop punk from Italy. These guys aren't shy about their influences, with song titles like "Hey, Hey That's Dr. Frank", "Panic Button", and "You Broke My Fucking Heart Again". It's not the most original thing ever, but it sounds good to me. (JER)

(I'm Not a Doctor/Via Andrea d'Isernia 20/80122/Napoli/ITALY)

RED PLANET "Let's Degenerate" CD

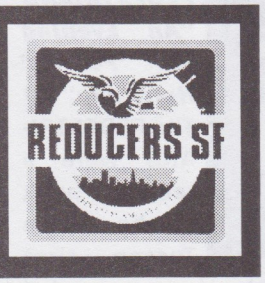
More brilliant 77-style power pop rock & roll from these Bay Area showmen. Produced and mixed by the FASTBACKS own Kurt Bloch. I hate to give such a great record such a short review, but what can I say other than that you need this to make your life complete. (BAM)

(Gearhead/PO Box 590968/ San Fransisco, CA 94159)

THE REDS/SWEET J.A.P. split 7"EP

Japan is key here: one of the REDS is moving to Japan, and SWEET J.A.P. is a Japanese band from Minnesota. The former are one of the finest bands around, while the latter continue to impress me, as their two tunes here blow away their great previous outing. Fans of Rip Off Records shouldn't miss this. (MC)

(Nice & Neat/PO Box 14177/Minneapolis, MN 5514)

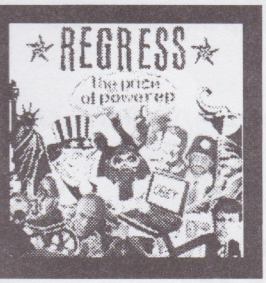


REDUCERS SF "Crappy Clubs And Smelly Pubs" CD

This is a really good disc. Like the best of their Oi heroes twenty years before, the REDUCERS know a good pop tune when they hear one. As much BUZZCOCKS as it is SLAUGHTER & THE DOGS, the catchy melodies and excellent lead guitar make this a standout. (RK)

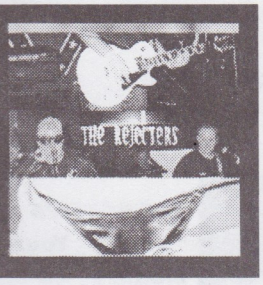
(TKO/4104 24th Street/San Francisco, CA 94114)

REVIEWS



REGRESS
"The Price Of Power" 7"
Four songs' worth of good, snotty, fast punk. This has a very old school feel to it, not unlike the GERMS. Worth picking up. (BAM)

(Boot Camp/PO Box 379463/Chicago, IL 60637)



REJECTERS
"Secessionville" CD
I'm sure that you can already tell where these folks are from: yep, it's more dirty, Southern-fried rock'n'roll. The songs deal with important topics like Star Trek, sex, and most importantly hash. One of the guys in this band goes by the name of Buster V. Gynerr...way to go, smarties. (MC)

(LEM/PO Box 3052/ Summerville, SC 29484)

REVERENDS
"Whiskey River" 7" EP
Six pop-rock songs from Italy. Punky at times, but fairly bland overall. It seems that more effort was put into the sleeve drawing than in the contents of the record. A priest pouring a bottle of booze onto a topless woman? But seriously, folks. (MC)

(Be Nice To Mommy/Shove, no address listed)

RHINO WRESTLERS/CHINGALEROS
split CD
A double shot of Spanish punk. The RHINO WRESTLERS are a Madrid teen combo that boasts a stunning LEMMY clone on vocals. Los CHINGALEROS, composed of members of AEROBITCH and Martin of the BLACKS, play some great, crazed punk rock. Worth investigating just for the CHINGALEROS tunes. (MC)

(Punch/Apdo. 60167/28080 Madrid/SPAIN)

RIP KC
"The Battle Against Inner Spirits" CD
Four Spanish rocker dudes bust out with their best HELLACOPTERS Impersonation this side of Sweden. The twelve songs here are packed with energy, and the guitars are crunchy and fantastic. They definitely focus on the punkier side of things. Driving and powerful. (MC)

(Punch/Apdo. 60167/28080 Madrid/SPAIN)



ROCK CITY CRIMEWAVE
"Sounds From The Underworld" CD
Creepy greaser hard rock/punk. The overdone formula of skulls, sinning, graveyards, and girls is present here, but these guys don't do that bad a job with it. Even so, there's nothing spectacular here. (MC)

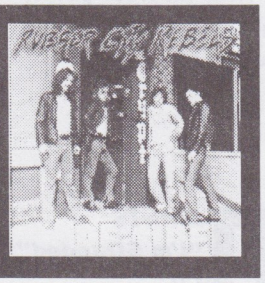
(Catapult/368 Congress Street, Studio 3/Boston, MA 02210)

ROCKET 69/DION BLADE & THE NEW KINGS OF ROCK
split 7"
One record, two bands, big guitars. ROCKET 69's "Six Foot Thirteen" is a decent glammy punk tune. DION BLADE take the speedy punk route, but seem to concentrate more on cover art than quality tunes: A giant woman is stomping a city, "Godzilla"-style, and dropping bombs out of her hoochie. (MC)

(Rockin' House/PO Box 12705/Reading, PA 19612)

RON & THE SPLINTERS
"Go Ron Go" CD
This is way fucking cool! Former OUTSIDERS guitarist teams up with former OTHER SIDE members to create bang-up folk-rock with excellent results! Besides digging up some choice covers, they also do a couple of songs the OUTSIDERS wrote in the 60s but never recorded. (AW)

(Inbetweens/PO Box 411141/San Francisco, CA 94141)



RUBBER CITY REBELS
"Re-Tired" CD
Wow, the fucking RUBBER CITY REBELS! This CD contains the five tunes off of their "From Akron" LP and a live set from 1977, so it's provides a great glimpse into the band's early stages. It must be Ohio month, since this CD is as essential as the PAGANS and PINK HOLES discs. Like it says on the disc: "Trashy yet Historic!" (MC)

(White Noise/537 SE Ash Street, Suite 400/Portland, OR 97214)



RUFIO
"Perhaps, I Suppose..."
These young, fresh-faced dudes are on a mission from God. Pity it wasn't aborted. Melodic pop-punk emo shit that's not as catchy as a good Christmas carol, but is recorded with that modern smooth production sound. What prompted Revelation to mess with the God-squad? (RK)

SHITLIST

(The Militia Group [!], no address listed)

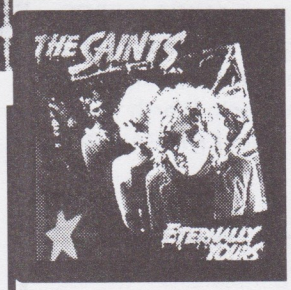
SAHARA HOTNIGHTS
"Living On Top Of Your World/Teenage Kicks" CD single
Smoking the mucho über-hyped DONNAS off stage during several estrogen battles across the European continent recently, this Swedish all-femme outfit is bursting with juicy stuff. "Living" is a brooding tune that takes a minute before the rock starts, while the UNDERTONES cover actually improves upon the original because it's faster and you don't have to hear the voice of that annoying little freak Ferghal Sharkey. They all wear pointy elf shoes, and that means I'm joining the Girl Band Geeks. (TS)

(RCA)



SAINTS
"I'm Stranded" CD
Captain Oi hits paydirt again with this reissue of the first SAINTS LP, one of the greatest punk rock records in history. The guitar sound is piledriving and crunchy (unlike that on those earlier Triple X reissues), so you get to hear this mid-70 Aussie band's killer tracks (such as the title cut, "Erotic Neurotic", "No Time", "Nights in Venice", "Spy in Love", and the incomparable "Demolition Girl" [though unfortunately not the long version!]) exactly as they were meant to sound. No punk or r'n'r fan can do without this amazing re-release. (JB)

(Captain Oi/www.captainoi.com)



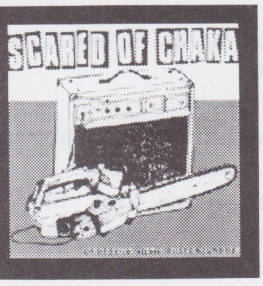
SAINTS
"Eternally Yours" CD
A reissue of the second SAINTS LP, once again courtesy of Captain Oi. On this record, the SAINTS departed somewhat from the stripped-down, paint-stripping sound associated with their debut, but Chris Bailey's snotty 60's punk-style vocals are still on display and whenever the band chose to rock like a mofo, as they did on "Lost and Found" and "This Perfect Day", few people could match them. In other, moodier songs, they added horns or acoustic guitars, often to surprisingly good effect. The last great SAINTS long-player. (JB)

(Captain Oi/www.captainoi.com)



SAVES THE DAY
"Stay What You Are" CD
Fortunately, these guys didn't stay what they were. They've dumped the old LIFETIME copy stuff and have transformed themselves into the bright light of emo. Catchy and upbeat – y'know, when the girl with the backpack dedicates her favorite poem to you. Great songs, excellent production, and well-crafted pop melodies ensure that this is going to be huge. (RK)

(Vagrant, look for them on MTV)

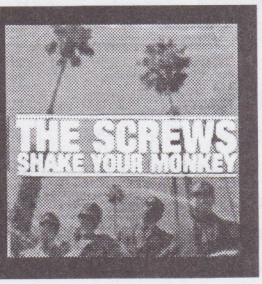


SCARED OF CHAKA
"Crossing With Switchblades" CD
I'm sure you know what these guys sound like by now, and if not you're missing out on a great garage-pop band. I really like the pop songs, but I could do without the lo-fi garage rock. Anyway, it's always worth your time and money to pick up the latest S.O.C. release. (JER)

(Hopeless/PO Box 7425/Van Nuys, CA 94109)

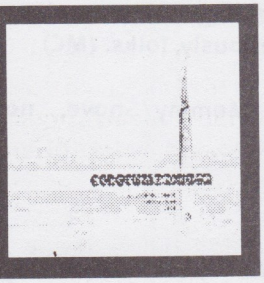
SCAT RAG BOOSTERS
"I'm Coming In" 7" EP
Another bluesy garage punk release from this great Canadian band. These folks have been wowing us garage dorks for a while, and these tunes are their best yet. Crypt almost broke their "no new bands" policy to work with them, so you know they've got something good going on. (MC)

(Yakisakana/51 Rue Pierre Renaude/76 100 Rouen/FRANCE)



THE SCREWS
"Shake Your Monkey" CD
This is the perfect blues companion to the DIRTBOMBS' soul assault. Again, Mick Collins and members of the NECESSARY EVILS and RED AUNTS work their magic, and you're left with no choice but to rock the fuck out. Like the new DIRTBOMBS album, this one is composed of some mighty fine covers, including JOHN LEE HOOKER and the ROLLING STONES songs. Shit hot! (MC)

(In The Red/118 W.Magnolia Blvd./PO Box 208/Burbank, CA 91506)



SCROTUM GRINDER
"The Greatest Sonic Abomination Ever" CD
This debut album from Florida's current premier thrash band is merciless and unremitting from start to finish. It has everything you'd want in a good thrash album: super high speed

music, tough metal breakdowns heavy on the guitar chuggas, and insane female vocals matched up with a aggressive male voice, yet there's enough creativity in the writing to keep this release far from the standard. Excellent sound quality, too. (AD)

(Prank/PO Box 410892/San Francisco, CA 94141)



SECRET AFFAIR
"Glory Boys" CD
I never really cared much for UK neo-Mod band SECRET AFFAIR, since they had a trumpet, rather arrogant pretentions and, worst of all, not nearly enough guitar crunch. But despite some boring white soul numbers, their debut LP sounds a lot better today than I remembered it being. There are several catchy, anthemic numbers herein (especially the title track and "Time For Action"), and even the guitar sounds louder (perhaps courtesy of a Captain Oi remix?). (JB)

(Captain Oi/www.captainoi.com)



SÉQUELLES
"Et tant pis si cela vous déplait" CD
Nifty 60's-style garage pop trash from Montreal. Les SÉQUELLES have a bouncy, exuberant attack with some nice fuzz guitar (e.g., on "Un Train"), occasional squealy organ frills, and goofy French lyrics. Given the growing popularity of campy French 60's pop, this might fly at the "Bardot Au Go Go" dance parties. Note the BEAU BRUMMELS cover. (JB)

(Grenadine/PO Box 42050/Montreal, Quebec H2W 2T3/CANADA)

SEVEN DAYS OF SAMSARA/SINCE BY MAN
split 12"
This album cover must have cost a fortune! SINCE BY MAN sound like a tedious screamo band. SEVEN DAYS OF SAMSARA are better. Both play the same basic style of music, but the latter have a heavier, hardcore edge. I liked them better live. (AD)

(Harmless/1218 W. Hood, Apt. 2/Chicago, IL 60660)

SEWER TROUT
'From The Forgotten Memories Of Punks..." CD
More fun than a whole bucketfull of turtle creek crawdads, the mighty SEWER TROUT live again (at least on this compilation). A great band from the golden age of East Bay punk rock, the SEWER TROUT lampooned society, punk rock, and everything in between. This CD captures all of their hits, like "Coors For Contras", "Vagina Envy", and "Que Sera", as well as pretty much every other track you could possibly want from them, so fans of early Lookout/Very Small records should love this. (JC)

(Sacto Punk Archives/1114 21st Street/Sacramento, CA 95814)

SHARK ATTACK
"Blood In The Water" 7"
Great old school balls-out hardcore. Stripped down, simple, pissed-off, Fast, and hard. What else do you need to hear? It's not surprising that a great label like Bridge 9 is on top of this. (BAM)

(Bridge 9/PO Box 990052/Boston, MA 02199)

SHORTWAVE APOLLO
"Snow White Attack" CD EP
Like good emo acts ELLIOTT & CURSIVE, SHORTWAVE APOLLO blend the attitude of punk with heartbreaking lyrics and smart instrumentation. All the emotions of rejection and disappointment bleed freely form this short but sweet 3-song EP. Don't miss out. (LD)

(www.shortwaveapollo.com)

SIN IN SPACE
"Asteroid Band" CD
Quitessential indie music. Like most of this genre, the songs all seem to blend into one another. If you're not sick of BUILT TO SPILL, MODEST MOUSE, and their mellow ilk, you might not find this too nauseating. They're rrom Santa Cruz, which makes perfect sense. (RK)

(Sin In Space/sininspace@yahoo.com)

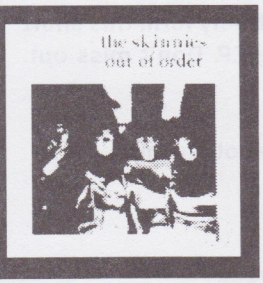
6290 DEEP
"So Punk It Hurts" CD
Funny and energetic (if not borderline retarded at times), this band is more entertaining than bad. A couple of the tracks are actually pretty catchy. Song titles like "Dead Dogs", "Smoke Crack, Worship Satan", and "Save The Strippers" are examples of what you're in store for. Bastard children of the DAYGLO ABORTIONS and the NOBODYS. (JC)

(Amp/92 Kenilworth Avenue South/ Hamilton, Ontario/CANADA)

SKARHEAD
"NY Thugcore" CD
This is no-bullshit East Coast hardcore that stays true to its brass knuckles and beer roots. In a world full of pretentious artists, it's nice to have a band of grimy hoodlums like this. This is a collection of rare tracks, demos, and live recordings, a throwback to the raw dog days of hardcore before effects pedals and fashion consultants. (STM)

(Triple Crown/West 57th Street, PMB 472/New York, NY 10019)

SHITLIST



SKINNIES
"Out Of Order" 7"
This is great 77-style, garagey power pop. The first two tracks were previously released on their "Kill The Beat" 7" in 1977, and there's also a demo version of a song and three live tracks from 1979. That's why this was the first in the "American Lost Punk Gems" 7" series. (BAM)

(Rave Up/Via Montecuccoli/00176 Roma/ITALY)

SKUNKS
"Earthquake Shake" LP
These Austin class-of-'77 punkers have been faves of mine for years. Besides the great title track, you get a side of cuts from their singles and a live side that repeats a couple from side one and includes a demented version of "Sister Ray" top boot! Classic stuff! (AW)

(Rave Up/Via Montecuccoli 13/00176 Roma/ITALY)

SLAUGHTER & THE DOGS
"The Punk Singles Collection" CD
What are you waiting for, punks? Herein you can find all of this great British band's killer singles from the late 70s, including "Cranked Up Really High", "The Bitch", "Where Have All the Bootboys Gone?", "You're a Bore", their cover of "Quick Joey Small", and "Dame to Blame", so if you don't already have their LP reissues (also on Captain Oi) you can't go wrong. Plus, you get all their later 7" releases, which aren't – and indeed couldn't possibly be – as great as the aforementioned songs. (JB)

(Captain Oi/www.captainoi.com)

SMASH YOUR FACE
7"
SMASH YOUR FACE are a perfect band in many ways. They play fast and furious, yet have melodies and a rock-'n'roll garage edge. Don't let the "melody" fool you, however, since these guys are NOT cute and poppy. They remind me a lot of the DWARVES. (AD)

(Prank/PO Box 410892/San Francisco, CA 94141)



SNUFF
"Blue Grey: Phase 9" CD EP
SNUFF are brilliant. They fuse the great song-writing of fellow Euro bands like LEATHERFACE with the drumming patterns and huge production of other Fat bands. They probably made a mistake by releasing a record as perfect as "Tweet Tweet My Lovely", since there's not too much you can do after that. This release contains nine tracks total; three of the seven studio tracks are instrumentals, and the remaining two songs are live. (BAM)

(Fat/PO Box 193690/San Francisco, CA 94119)

SOME CHICKEN
"New Religion" b/w "Blood On The Wall" 7"
Damaged Goods has been doing a series of '77 punk reissues from the Raw Records catalog. SOME CHICKEN is included in this series, and they deliver some of the most aggressive and (yes) raw punk to come out of the UK during this time. A totally great single, as are the others in the series. (MC)

(Damaged Goods/PO Box 671/London E17 9GH/ENGLAND)

SONIC ASSASSIN
"State Is Enemy, Forever!" CD
The cover reads "14 songs of hate on your stereo," but this really is a mixed bag, kinda like my nutbag, which contains cashews, peanuts, almonds, and two standard-issue, honey-roasted testes. Liner notes by the most esteemed rock'n'roll surgeon Mr. Deniz Tek, MD, who produced the LIPSTICK KILLERS 1979 debut single ("Hindu Gods Of Love") and wrote both RADIO BIRDMAN tunes. These are all hard to improve upon but nonetheless get a solid treatment here, indicating that these guys are taking the France via Australia via Detroit route, which is all fine and dandy with me. (TS)

(Freakshow)



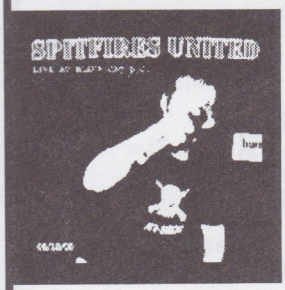
SPARECHANGEoo
"Fifty Thousand Memories" CD EP
Five tracks of well-executed college rock, should that interest you. It's got plenty of guts, well-produced passion, melody, thick guitars, etc. I'm sure they'll never "make" it, but they sure as hell are trying. (RK)

(Cargo/www.cargomusic.com)

SPEEDEALER/SOCIAL LEPERS
"Trans-Atlantic Speed Trials" split 7" EP
Pissed off? Spun out? This record is for you. SPEEDEALER supply their usual rock pummeling, but I'm left unimpressed. The SOCIAL LEPERS are victorious here, sounding like a less chaotic HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE. Two songs each, so don't do too many lines. (MC)

(Bronx Cheer/PO Box 13/Glasgow G12 8VT/SCOTLAND)

REVIEWS



SPITFIRES UNITED
"Live at Black Cat D.C." CD
"Ass kicking unity Oi! with harmonica." I guess that's true for at least one song. This is an entire live set, warts and all. The highlights include a love song about Guinness and a standard cover of "Ace of Spades". If you are into the whole working class/beer anthem type of punk/Oi!, give it a go. (MC)

(Burn-One.com/125 N.Main Street, Suite 402/Port Chester, NY 10573)

STARVATIONS
"A Blackout To Remember" CD
A damn fine CD. The STARVATIONS really set themselves apart from the pack with this release. Southern California is producing more than its share of boring 77-type bands, but these guys take the road less traveled by displaying a very dark, dangerous and bluesy sound that's very much like early GUN CLUB. (MC)

(Revenge/423 Bryson Springs/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

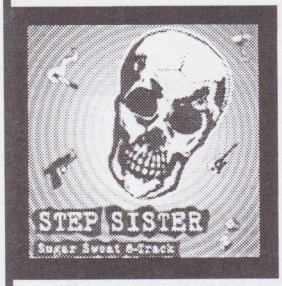
STATIC 84
"The Servants Are Rising" CD
Galloping drums, two guitars with one with one doing high octive chords throughout, impassioned personal lyrics, slow chunky breakdowns, and songs with titles like "Blindspot" and "Tightrope". Brett must give me CDs like this to piss me off. Anyone listening to this who is remotely familiar with SCREW 32 could tell that these guys are fully ripping us off. Where's my royalty check? (JC)

(Join the Team Player/no address listed)



STATUS QUO
" The Technicolor Dreams of..." double CD
The STATUS QUO are mainly (and justly) remembered for their classic slab of psychedelia, "Pictures of Matchstick Men", and for their precipitous descent into horrendous boogie rock during the 1970s. In the 60s, however, the QUO were far better than one-hit wonders, as this splendid collection proves. Their pre-QUO material (recorded as the SPECTRES and the TRAFFIC JAM) was excellent, and their first album is full of imaginative, heavy-guitar psych blasts that are every bit as good as their hit, such as "Black Veils of Melancholy", "Technicolor Dreams", "Paradise Flat", and "Sunny Cellophane Skies". (JB)

(Castle Music, no address listed)

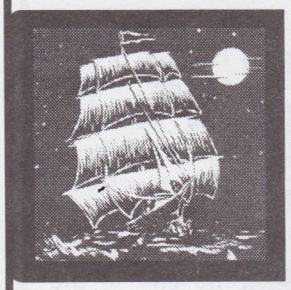


STEP SISTER
"Sugar Sweat 8 - Track/Second Hand Smoke" CD
I've been waiting a while for this one. Cleveland's STEP SISTER play excellent punk'n'roll that sounds kinda like Pat Todd (LAZY COWGIRLS) fronting the NEW BOMB TURKS. This CD contains two full albums, so there is plenty of rock to go around. (MC)

(Smog Veil/774 Mays #10, PMB 454/Incline Village, NV 89451)

THE STEREO
"No Traffic" CD
Clean and polished pop music that seems awfully MTV-friendly. I'm kind of surprised that something so obviously lacking in punk edge would be on Fueled By Ramen. Not at all recomendable. (JC)

(Fueled By Ramen/PO Box 12563/Gainsville, FL 32604)



SULTANS
"Ghost Ship" CD
A badass rockin' record by a band that includes members of ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT. Since the SULTANS don't detract from their guitar punch by adding horns, something I'm not at all partial to, I actually prefer this to R.F.T.C.'s own releases. They've got a definite SUPERSUCKERS-type sound and vibe going here, and songs like "My Sights are Low" and "Your Mouth is Open and Your Eyes are Shut" are guaranteed to make all but the most out-of-control drunks happy. (JB)

(Swami; dist. by Sympathy for the Record Industry)

SUPERHELICOPTER LTD.
" Rejected #6" 7" EP
This is part of a series of new bands doing covers of the MEAN RED SPIDERS' "Rejected at the High School Dance". The A-side has two originals containing some of the most shrill feedback I've ever heard. Jesus, guys, relax! This shit is loud as hell, GUITAR WOLF-style, and the cover is hilarious. (LD)

(High School Reject/Berlageweg 12/9731 LN Groningen/HOLLAND)

TERRORPAIN
1988 demo 7"
TERRORPAIN were a short-lived English band that broke up in 1988. The sound of this 7" is gritty and crusty and heavy on the HERESY influence, and the various band members went on to play in bands like SHUTDOWN (UK) and PROPHCY OF DOOM. (AD)

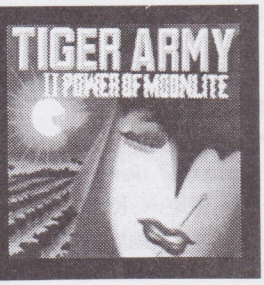
SHITLIST

(Burrito/PO Box 3204/Grandon, FL 33509)



THRALL
"Hung Like God" CD
Brace yourselves, folks: this is the soundtrack to the end of the world. We're talking about raging guitars and furious vocals heavily dipped in evil. These guys are not kidding around, so grab a brew, don your black clothes, and get ready for the ride to hell! (LD)

(Reptilian/403 S. Broadway/Baltimore, MD 21231)



TIGER ARMY
"II: Power Of Moonlite" CD
Rockabilly Nick 13 returns with a second helping of TIGER ARMY. We're again treated to a fine collection of psycho/punk tunes, all rockin' and creepy, and a little help from his buddies from A.F.I. and RANCID doesn't hurt either. (MC)

(Hellcat/2798 Sunset Blvd./Los Angeles, CA 90026)

TIMESCAPE ZERO
"Total War" CD
First off, they get bonus points for having Boyd Rice on the record. Political mid-tempo hardcore that brings to mind a less studio-polished version of SUICIDAL TENDENCIES' late-80's work. The old Boston SXE scene would also be a good comparison. It's pretty balls to the walls, kids, so get it if you like it rough and rugged but with a brain behind it. (STM)

(X-Ray/PO Box 820407/Miami, FL 33082)

TOGETHER ALONE
"The Linus Sessions" CD
Phew, these guys are angry! Their sound is very dirge-y, and the vocals reminded me of the jock rock stylings of LIMP BIZKIT. The songs are about being better than all their old friends, feeling disgusted, blah blah blah, you get the idea. Coupled with a pretty lousy recording, this isn't the best thing I've heard this month. (LD)

(Creep/PMB 220 E. Market Street/West Chester, PA 19382)

TOKYOS
"God Save The Emperor!" LP
I'd never heard anything by this San Diego band circa 1978 before, probably because it hasn't been released.until now! Very catchy pop-punk, with some surf and garage elements tossed in, make for a nice listening experience. I dig it! (AW)

(Rave Up/Via Montecuccoli 13/00176 Roma/ITALY)

TRAVOLTAS
"Teenbeat" CD
An amazingly cool pop punk release which combines irrepressible 60's surf melodies, super-loud guitars, fine songwriting, and even an occasional synth which, to my surprise, doesn't end up detracting from their sound. Leave it to a couple of guys from Holland and some indigenous SoCal dudes to capture the surf/beach vibe and properly update it for the 90s. One listen to "Pray For Sun", "Do the Gal-i-gator", and the stupendous, moody, synth-driven "Pacific Coast Highway" should have you hooked on the TRAVOLTAS for life. (JB)

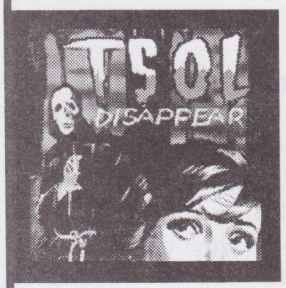
(Coldfront/PO Box 8345/Berkeley, CA 94609)

TRICKY WOO
"Les Sables Magiques" CD



Pretty cool rock from Canada for all you bong-hitters. The tunes here are all very jammy, and have a late 60's feel to them. Their songs seem to draw equally from 60's psychedelic garage and 70's rock/glam. All the tunes build up slowly, but the explosion is worth the wait. (MC)

(Tee Pee/PO Box 20307/New York, NY 10009)



T.S.O.L.
"Disappear" CD
The original line-up (minus the drummer) is back, even though Jack said he wouldn't rejoin in "Rage: 20 Years Of West Coast Punk". Regardless, they've managed to put together a rocking record which pretty much falls between their first and "Beneath The Shadows". Twelve new originals that they ought to be proud of, and cover art that they ought to be ashamed of. (RK)

(Nitro, for promotional use only)

TSUNAMI BOMB
"Invasion From Within!" CD EP
Tomatohead Records brings you their latest in fun punk with this 6-song stick of dynamite. It's packed full of hook-laden, driving punk rock that is playfully dark, in the manner of the GROOVIE GHOULIES. Eerie keyboards, an energetic rhythm section, and talented female vocals round this one out. Recommended. (LD)

(Tomatohead/PO Box 61298/Sunnyvale, CA 94088)

TURPENTINES

"By Popular Demand" LP

Yay, the second TURPENTINES album! These zany Swedes just never let down, lifting the cover art straight from the STATUS QUO album "Hello", but don't let that fool you! Thumbs up, fast and tight riffage the way we like to crank it at the Amsterdam Apeman's swingers castle. They also get the songtitle-of-the-week award for "Take It Like A Man, Man". Heartily recommended! (TS)

(White Jazz)

UNITAS

"Porch Life" CD

Fact: this features Jason Black (bass) of HOT WATER MUSIC, the drummer and guitarist from DISCOUNT, and the tour manager from both bands. Preconception: you can guess what this sounds like. Reality: you are dead wrong, since it sounds like a slow AC/DC meeting LYNYRD SKYNYRD. There's a lot of Southern and country feel to it, and maybe even a little KINKS thrown in for good measure. (BAM)

(No Idea/PO Box 14636/Gainesville, FL 32604)

UNITED STATES OF MIND

"True to Your School" 7" EP

The debut release from these Boston/UK pop-punk upstarts. It immediately recalls the RAMONES or - dare I say - GREEN DAY, but only if they were totally obliterated, as these guys obviously are. All in all, these are three pretty damn good drunken punk anthems, so have a listen if you're into non-political, fun punk rock. (LD)

(Hank/293 Pawtucket Blvd. #2/Lowell, MA 01854)

URBAN WASTE

s/t 7" EP

Fantastic bootleg of the highly sought-after URBAN WASTE EP. Recorded in 1982, the eight songs on this EP are some of the best early hardcore you could ever hope to hear. It really puts all the shit going on today to shame, so if you see this around you'd be a fool to pass it up. (MC)

(bootleg, no address listed)

VAPIDS

"Charm School Dropouts" CD

An awesome fucking record filled with straightforward punk rock and lots of attitude. They don't mess anything up with two many guitar chords or unnecessary studio trickery. I would love to see the VAPIDS on a bill with the LILLINGTONS, since both bands kick ass in the same 1, 2 no-frills style. Probably my favorite record on Amp so far. (JC)

(Amp/92 Kenilworth Avenue South/Hamilton, Ontario/CANADA)

VAPORS

"New Clear Day" CD

The VAPORS were a British power pop band who scored an international hit with "Turning Japanese", which has since appeared on several lame New Wave comps. But instead of being a bunch of skinny-tie poseurs who inadvertently managed to write one good song, Dave Fenton and company were capable of bashing out an impressive number of catchy (though overlooked) guitar-oriented pop blasts. Many of them appeared on this, their debut LP, including "Spring Collection", "America", "Bankers", and "News at Ten". So give 'em a listen. (JB)

(Captain Oi/www.captainoi.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"A Fistful Of Rock'N'Roll, Volume 7" CD

The latest in a series of RAWK comps compiled by Sal from ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN. This volume features great rockin' bands like the LOUDMOUTHS, ADAM WEST, the DONNAS, and the CHERRY VALENCE. Nineteen bands total, all of which bring the rock. (MC)

(www.victoryrecords.com, or listen.to/afistfullofrock)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Aliens, Psycho and Wild Things, Vol. 2" CD

A sequel to the great comp released a year or so ago, featuring more cool garage bands from the Virginia and North Carolina area in the mid-60s. As with the first volume, this is killer stuff, featuring a batch of obscure combos like the PANICS, LIVE WIRES, ROACHES, FLYS, NITE BEATS, MINUTEMEN, CHANGING TIMES, CREATIONS, and many more. Much of it is previously unreleased, with great sound and in-depth liners! (AW)

(?)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Bits & Pieces: A Theologian Records Sampler" CD

I've liked the majority of this label's output, which largely comprises spiky, spunky punk and helped to forge the now ubiquitous SoCal melodic hardcore sound. This contains unreleased tracks from the DEVIATES, the SHUTDOWNS, CIGAR, 98 MUTE, CHEATER, and the GOODS, as well as PENNYWISE, the PSEUDO HEROES, HOMEMADE, F.Y.P., DEAD TREE, OUT OF ORDER, PROP 13, and the SUGAR BUTCHERS. (RK)

(Theologian/PO Box 1070/Hermosa Beach, CA 90254)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Geek Monger Music Vol. 1" CD

A brand new label and totally obscure bands doesn't always equal an exciting listening experience, but in this case I've been very pleasantly surprised. Twenty shiny new bands from all over the US are introduced here in all of their emo/hardcore glory. Most

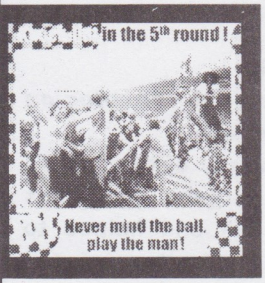
SHITLIST

12CENT. (LD)

(Murkta/PO Box 4663/Lafayette, IN 47903)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Industrial Strength Records Compilation 2001" CD
Industrial Strength - the little punk label that looks like its going to take over the world. Their roster is expanding like crazy and this comp reflects that. 24 tracks by bands that are mostly good, some pretty great, and only one that I can say that was downright bad. Some of my favorite tracks were provided by the EAST BAY CHASERS, STRYCHNINE, GLAMOUR PUSSY, and OPPRESSED LOGIC. (JC)

(Industrial Strength/2824 Regatta Blvd/Richmond, CA 94804)



VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Knock Out in the Fifth Round" CD
The fifth entry in the fine Knock Out label's series of international samplers. It's impossible to go wrong with this collection of streetpunk, Oi, punk, and psychobilly numbers, especially since it features the WRETCHED ONES, CHARGE 69, SPLODGENESSABOUNDS, and BONECRUSHER. The biggest surprises for me were the stellar tracks by the OITERS, RADIO 69, and LOUSY (amazing yob vocalist!), all bands that I was previously unfamiliar with. (JB)

(Knock Out/Postfach 100716/46527 Dinslaken/GERMANY)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Live" 7"
Herein there are two bands that sound like ALL, in a good way (WRETCH LIKE ME, TANGER), ALL not sounding like ALL at all, and a great hardcore offering (GOOD RIDDANCE). I just wish ALL had picked a better song than "Educated Idiot" (BAM)

(Blood Of The Young/PO Box 1441/Minneapolis, MN 55414)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"O & O Records: The Center Of The Universe, Book II"
Two tracks each from each member of the Owned & Operated stable – ALL, ARMCHAIR MARTIAN, BAD ASTRONAUT, JANIS FIGURE, the PAVERS, SEASON TO RISK, SHINER, SOMEDAY I, TANGER, and WRETCH LIKE ME. O & O tend to veer more towards the damaged, twisted rock sound than the sweet melodies of their founders, ALL. (RK)

(Owned & Operated/PO Box 36/Ft. Collins, CO 80522)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"One Eye Open-Masked Bands Salute Sammy Davis Jr." CD
Here is a compilation of some really odd bands doing some very strange songs either about or in tribute to SAMMY DAVIS, JR. It's kind of hard to tell what's up with this. The bands include the PHANTOM SURFERS and the GOBLINS, plus there are lots of old clips and tap dancing sounds. Hmm... (LD)

(Israphon-West/1075 Smith Street/Buckles, VT 05446)

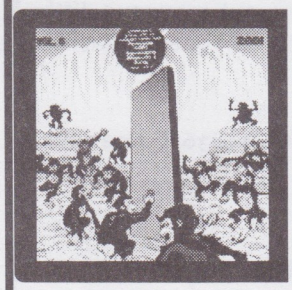
VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Pie and Ears, Volume 1" CD
A fine collection of Cleveland bands, then and now. Being a fan of the "Cleveland Confidential" comp, the DEAD BOYS, PERE UBU, the PAGANS, and the town in general (when in Cleveland visit Big Fun, one of the best toy stores in the world), I firmly agree with Ian Hunter when he says "Cleveland Rocks". Some of my favorites were the DEFNICS, EASTER MONKEYS, 2 BOBS, St. JAYNE, and LAZY DYNAMITE. (JC)

(Smogveil/ www.smogveil.com)



VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Psychedelic States: Florida, volume 1" CD
This first entry in a projected new state-by-state 60's garage series explodes from the gate with a huge bang. With its rednecks, wealthy retirees, giant insects, and unbearable heat, Florida is apparently just the sort of place to nurture alienated kids who want rant and rave. So it's no surprise to find scads of killer tracks on here, including those by the BERKLEY FIVE, the TWELFTH NIGHT, the OUTSIDERS, the DARK HORSEMEN, the ILLUSIONS, and the UNDERTAKERS. (JB)

(Gear Fab, no address listed)



VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Punk O Rama 2001, Vol 6" CD
The latest Epitaph sampler, showcasing their current roster. It includes new signings the BUSINESS, RAISED FIST, DEATH BY STEREO, and HOT WATER MUSIC, as well as unreleased tracks by NOFX, PENNYWISE, the DESCENDENTS, PULLEY, and MILLENCOLIN. I suspect you already know if you can continue to live without this. (RK)

(Epitaph/www.epitaph.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Short, Fast + Loud, Volume 1" CD
This is an international compilation featuring 40 of the best new hardcore bands. As the title suggests, you won't find any pop punk, ska, or garage rock on this compilation. The genres you will find assaulting your eardrums span everything from

thrash to noise, and the standout tracks are by LIFE'S HALT, WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?, PIGNATION, and ENTROPIA. This comp comes with a fanzine of the same title (whose editor is Chris Dodge of Slap A Ham). (AD)

(Slap A Ham/PO Box 7337/Alhambra, CA 91802)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Shout! Northwest Killers 1964-65" CD
Okay, moving right along, here's volume two of the series with more Northwest garage monsters like the ELEGANTS, INCREDIBLE KINGS, LEGENDS, ECCENTRICS, CANADIAN V.I.P.S, and more. What impressed me most was the number of interracial combos featured here, which bridge the gap between early soul/R&B and garage rock. Very cool! (AW)

(Norton/Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10267)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Stomp! Northwest Killers 1960-64" CD
Yow! Insane fratbash and garage rock mania from the vaults of the legendary Kearney Barton! From the opening kookiness of "Werewolf" by the FRANTICS to the sequel "No Werewolf", this is non-stop dance party action! The ADVENTURERS, ARTESIANS, and IMPERIALS are all as much fun as a night at the Spanish Castle probably was. Yeah!! (AW)

(Norton/Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10267)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Tomorrow Will Be Worse, Volume 2" CD
Eight of the best current hardcore bands from around the world dish out 24 songs of thrashing terror that will stifle your dog and make your neighbors hate you when you listen to it. The bands featured are the totally awesome REAL REGGAE, the blistering KRIGSHOT, the scorching MUKEKA DE RATO, MK ULTRA, the frighteningly furious 9 SHOCKS TERROR, the blazing UNCURBED, the incensed SCALPLOCK, and the mighty RUIDO. (AD)

(Sound Pollution/PO Box 17742/Covington, KY 41017)



VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Warped Tour 2001" CD
If you dig the kind of bands that grace the stages of the Warped tour, this is definitely the comp for you. 26 tracks, virtually all of them previously unreleased, including RANCID, NEW FOUND GLORY, ANTI-FLAG, A.F.I., BIGWIG, MIDTOWN, the VANDALS, the SWINGIN' UTTERS, the MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES, the ATARIS, NO USE FOR A NAME, the DEVIATES, and AGENT 51. Impressive stuff. (RK)

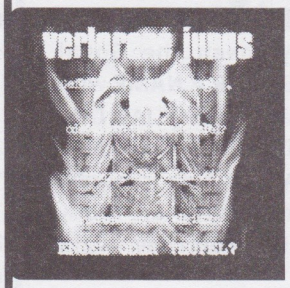
(Side One Dummy/6201 Sunset Blvd, Suite 211/Hollywood, CA 90028)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Work It On Out! Northwest Killers 1965-66" CD
Now we're moving into the mid-60s and a more fuzzed-out garage sound, with bands like ROCKY AND HIS FRIENDS (who cover the WAILERS!), MISTERIANS, VANDALS, PLYMOUTH ROCKERS, and CASTELLS, among others. As with other volumes, a lot of this is unreleased mayhem, and there are fab liner notes to read while you dig the unhinged rock action! (AW)

(Norton/Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10267)

VARUKERS
"The Riot City Years" CD
What can I tell esteemed Hit List readers about the VARUKERS that they don't already know? This is protest music! A fine English chaos punk band in their prime, and on here one can find the "Die For Your Government" and "Led To the Slaughter" EPs and the "Bloodsuckers" and "Another Religion, Another War" LPs. Although written in 1983 and 1984, most of the politcally-infused lyrics could easily apply to today's governments and global concerns. (JC)

(PunkCore/PO Box 916/Middle Island, NY 11953)



VERLORENE JUNGS
"Engel oder Teufel?" CD
Crisply-produced anti-racist Oi from Germany. The opening song "Viel zu lange" is a total classic with an irresistable singalong chorus, heavy guitars, and a nice bouncy beat, and there are a couple of other songs on here that are nearly as good (such as "Nur leere Worte" and "Lernt mit uns zu leben"). These "lost boys" are unusually diverse for an Oi band, and they even add an accordian (which is OK), an acoustic guitar (also OK), or a ska beat (not OK) on certain tracks. (JB)

(Bad Dog/PO Box 61 06 41/10937 Berlin/GERMANY)



WANNA-BES
"Round and Round" CD
Having been less than impressed with their EPs, I was pleasantly surprised by their full-length debut. The WANNA-BES come off sounding like a cross between CHIXDIGGIT and the LILLINGTONS, with heavy-hitting hooks and unique vocals. Maybe I just need to listen to their vinyl again, but I never

SHITLIST

saw something this good coming. (JER)

(Panic Button/PO Box 148010/Chicago, IL 60614)



WELT
"Brand New Dream" CD
I've never heard of these guys before, but I'm glad I have now. At their finest, they mesh the SoCal melodies of NO USE FOR A NAME with the gruff rock thang of SOCIAL DISTORTION. At their worst, they do a passable GAMEFACE, which is hardly an insult. Whoever did the art really loves John Yates (as well they ought to). (RK)

(BYO/www.byorecords.com)

X
"Home Is Where The Floor Is" 7" EP
First off, not the L.A. band. This X is one of the finest punk bands ever to come out of Australia. The four tunes here were recorded in 1978 with the original line-up, and it's all classic stuff, especially the title track. They are even touring the U.S. this summer! Essential. (MC)

(RockNRoll Blitzkrieg/PO Box 11906/ Berkeley, CA 94712)

Y
"Global Player" CD
Seventeen songs of balls-out thrash that have a touch of crust from one of Germany's leading hardcore outfits. This has enough intensity to fuel the proverbial revolution. File next to STACK. (AD)

(Sound Pollution/PO Box 17742/Covington, KY 41017)

YESTERDAY'S KIDS
"Everything Used to Be Better" CD



Has Panic Button put out a bad record yet? I don't think so. This is an excellent 8-song EP from a young band that has spent lots of quality time with "Kerplunk"-era GREEN DAY. I think naming a song "Nothing Gold Can Stay" is pretty cliché, but aside from that minor transgression their science is tight. (JER)

(Panic Button/PO Box 148010/Chicago, IL 60614)

ZEN GUERRILLA
"Shadows On The Sun" CD
The promotional advance copy of this here new ZG album that just plonked on my grateful doormat says "Surrender on Demand" but Pavitt's cronies are gonna have to pry this sucka outta my stonecold clasped hands when I'm DEAD, and they'd better realize that the Slugman won't let 'em walk away without a limp. Fuckin-A, ZEN GUERILLA are totally rad, and when they tour Europe again – cowabunga, dude – my tubular Dutch ass is, like, so there. (TS)

(SubPop)

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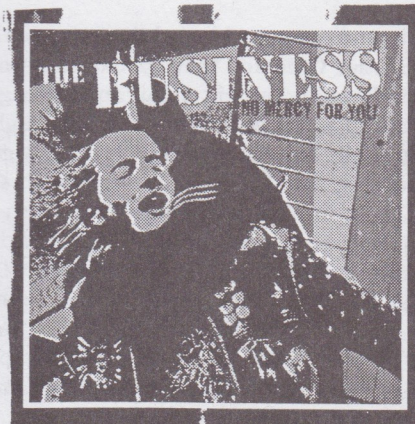
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BOOKREVIEWS

Fortunate Son: George W. Bush and the Making of an American President
by J. H. Hatfield (New York: Soft Skull Press, 2001)

It's a tale of an idiot, told by a criminal; full of ominous portent, heralded by none. OK, so I'm not William Shakespeare, but that is my ten word synopsis of *Fortunate Son: George W. Bush and the Making of an American President* by J. H. Hatfield.

I've been hearing about this book for ages now. It was originally published by St. Martin's Press (an imprint of Random House) during the 2000 Presidential Campaign. Although a fairly run-of-the-mill biography of George W. Bush, Hatfield was able to spice up the story with the inevitable skeletons in the closet that he'd used cocaine, was a frat boy party animal (even though, technically, Yale doesn't have frats), dodged the draft by miraculously getting a pilot slot in the Texas National Guard, dumped a girlfriend he loved because she was Jewish, and became wealthy serving as a board member for several financially-ailing companies, drawing 6- and 7-figure bonuses despite their being in financial dire straits. And that's just the small stuff. The ultimate gist of the book is that George W. Bush is a construct - one fashioned from the crucible of privilege, connections, money, and deceit. So far, George W. Bush sounds no different from any other professional politician, and this book no different from the countless politician biographies which have preceded it.

But there is something unusual about *Fortunate Son*. Shortly after St. Martin's published the book, they yanked it from the shelves (the modern day equivalent of a book burning). Not because it wasn't selling - it actually broke into the amazon.com Top 20 almost instantaneously - but because, despite vigorous fact-checking by St. Martin's legal counsel, the press called into question the veracity of Hatfield's research and put pressure on him to reveal his anonymous sources. Then, to top it off, it was discovered that Hatfield was a convicted felon.

The use of anonymous sources is a long and time-honored tradition amongst journalists. To this day we don't know the true identity of "Deep Throat," and he toppled an entire Presidency! Protecting the anonymity of sources providing damaging yet crucial information is usually considered a mark of journalistic integrity. Yet Hatfield was publicly pilloried for doing just that. As for Hatfield's previous criminal record, as a reader and as a U.S. citizen I fail to see how that has any bearing on the content of the book. True, he committed a crime in the past; he also served prison time for it. As one reader suggested in her amazon.com review of the book, perhaps Hatfield's past made him more expert on the subject of evaluating criminal behavior in others. Regardless, fact-checked and adequately cited evidence was presented in a public forum, and it should have been addressed and refuted in that same public forum, if it was to be done at all.

Unfortunately, Hatfield was perhaps criminally *naïve* to believe that he'd be able to slide by on anonymous sources. As they say, "if you mess with the bull, expect the horns." The media machine which Hatfield called out as complicit in fabricating a politician from out of a podunk buried him alive. His reputation was ruined, his book was essentially burned, and his message was almost entirely lost. Soft Skull Press, an independent left-wing publishing house, has since republished the book with a dizzying number of new forwards, introductions, polemics, and exposés.

I have no way of personally corroborating all of Hatfield's sources and citations. But there are copious amounts of them. St. Martin's Press' legal counsel and fact checkers went through them and found them all copacetic. Until, that is, the Bush campaign and the media put pressure on them. Regardless of whether or not every minute detail in the book is the truth, I believe Mr. Hatfield's essential story: that, had George W. Bush been a shrub by any other name, the American public would have laughed at the possibility of him becoming a presidential candidate, much less the *actual* President of the United States. He would, in fact, have been nothing more than a failed oil-man running a shrimp boat somewhere.

Considering this book in the aftermath of the "chad fandango," and with the first 100 days of Bush's administration already behind us, I honestly feel that a terrible crime was committed against the American public. Whatever the book's flaws, it was the most comprehensive and unbiased view of George W. Bush available to the voting public, and it was snatched from our grip during a time when we desperately needed that information most. Four years from now, when the country thinks to themselves "I wish I had known then what I know now," I hope Hatfield will take some solace in at least being able to say "I told you so."

-Reviewed by Alexandra Zorn
[This review is reprinted courtesy of Splendid Ezine (http://www.splendidezine.com]

Motley Crue: The Dirt: Confessions of the World's Most Notorious Rock Band
by Tommy Lee, Mick Mars, Vince Neil and Nikki Sixx, with Neil Strauss
(New York: Regan Books, 2001)

Ten years ago, Kurt Cobain and company blasted their way to the top of the charts, banishing Motley Crüe and their cartoonishly-coiffured ilk to the amusement park/county fair gig circuit and the pages of *Circus Magazine*. The Crüe did not go gentle into that good night, however. First, they replaced pretty-boy Vince Neil with an ugly guy who couldn't sing in an ill-advised attempt to curry favor with the "alternative" music crowd. Then, in what was dubbed a "return to their roots," they welcomed Neil back into the fold and recorded another album of middling metal. Through it all, the record-buying public remained wholly disinterested. With their bank accounts dwindling rapidly, the Crüe hatched their boldest scheme yet; in a move akin to hiring Claude Monet to paint a tool shed, they tapped Neil Strauss, a *New York Times* reporter, to help them pen their autobiography. *The Dirt* is the fruit of that curious alliance.

The Dirt strives to be daring, unprecedented and, most of all, shocking. Until you read *The Dirt*, the dust jacket warns, "[y]ou don't know what decadence is . . .". In reality, it reads like an episode of VH-1's "Behind the Music" with lots of cursing. In a series of monologues, the band members and other key players chronicle the Crüe's early struggles, massive success, tragic fall, and highly debatable rebirth. The book is heavy on drug use and tragedy (i.e., Nikki Sixx's drug addiction, Mick Mars' degenerative bone disease, Tommy Lee's vocabulary, and the bloating of Vince Neil) and extremely light on anything pertaining to music. This approach might have been cutting edge five years ago, but with the advent of "Behind The Music," copping to drug use and antisocial behavior has become *de rigeur*. Furthermore, the majority of these anecdotes were included in "Motley Crüe: Behind The Music," so for the average Motley Crüe fan, the only shocking thing about *The Dirt* is going to be its $27.95 cover price. The band tries to compensate for the recycled nature of this material by making the sex scenes really explicit. For those of us who find tales of sodomizing strippers with microphones neither

titillating nor interesting, that's not really a selling point.

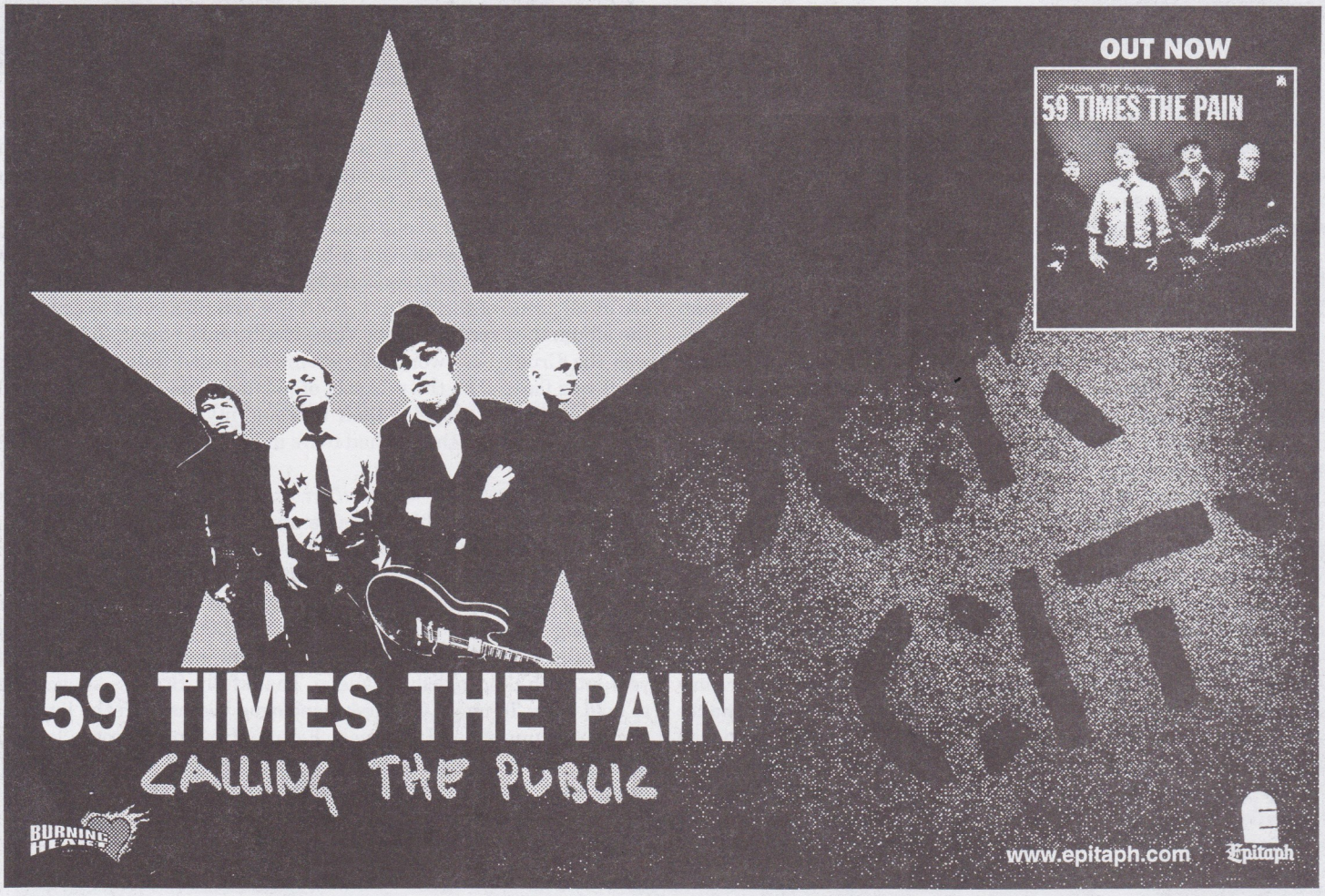
The Dirt is not without its charms, however. The sheer boneheadedness of the band members is sure to entertain. In summing up his career, Vince Neil announces with no small amount of pride that, after 20 years and a vehicular homicide conviction, he still gets drunk - only now he does it with Mel Gibson rather than his band mates. And, in a textbook case of the pot calling the kettle black, Tommy Lee laments the fact that, on the "Dr. Feelgood" tour, the Crüe were forced to bring along "cheesy pop-metal posers like Warrant and Whitesnake" rather than "cooler opening acts like Iggy Pop or Hüsker Dü." Apparently, no one told him that Hüsker Dü broke up more than a year before the start of the tour and, if there were any justice in this world, he would be skimming Iggy Pop's pool. Equally amusing is Nikki Sixx who, convinced that only a famous woman could truly understand him, simultaneously asked out Drew Barrymore, Jenny McCarthy and Cindy Crawford by faxing a form letter to their respective management companies. It's a wonder that Mick Mars, band philosopher, can put up with these intellectual lightweights. Surely they can't appreciate the brilliance of his theory that, with World War I fast approaching, the captain of the Titanic crashed into the iceberg on purpose in order to test the ship's durability.

The Dirt also gives underground music fans a chance to see how the other half lives. Nikki Sixx partied with the Circle Jerks, listened to the Controllers, shared practice space with the Mau Maus, and dated goth-rock über-minx Dinah Cancer. So one has to wonder, how did the Crüe end up being so unbelievably lame? As *The Dirt* makes clear, the answer is remarkably simple. Unlike the aforementioned bands, the Crüe sold out early and often and, if that didn't work, they gave up and tried a whole new way of selling out. During the "Generation Swine" tour, the band decided to project footage of people killing themselves and getting burned to death "to show the audience that, no matter how miserable they were, they still had it pretty good." This dalliance with high art didn't sit well with the audience and was quickly scrapped. As Sixx explains, "Kids don't go to a Motley Crüe concert to think about their own mortality; they go to a Motley Crüe concert to hopefully get a blow job in the back seat of a car." After reading *The Dirt*, one can't help but wonder whether the Crüe are at all proud of their *oeuvre*. Both Lee and Sixx seem to agree that the album they recorded with Vince Neil's replacement, John Corabi, was the Crüe's best work, but when the record didn't sell and the band was faced with the prospect of playing clubs rather than stadiums, they hastily canceled their tour and invited Neil back into the band. Lee confesses that he had tears in his eyes when he told Corabi he was fired.

So there you have it. *The Dirt* is neither groundbreaking nor shocking, but it is highly readable and, for that, co-author Strauss deserves a lot of credit. Piecing together a comprehensible book from hundreds of hours of interviews with this bunch must have been a daunting task. One can picture him, hunched over a transcript, deftly editing away "dudes," rads," and "motherfuckers" in a valiant attempt to make the Crüe sound, if not semi-intelligent, at least conversant with the English language. Thankfully, Strauss knows when to hold back; Tommy Lee's first monologue begins with the immortal words, "Duuuuuude. Fuck yeah. Finally. How much room is Nikki going to get, bro? Fuck." And if that quote, strikes you as profoundly funny, then *The Dirt* just might be the book for you.

-Reviewed by J. Hunter Bennett




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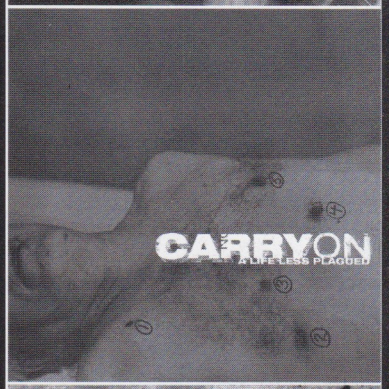
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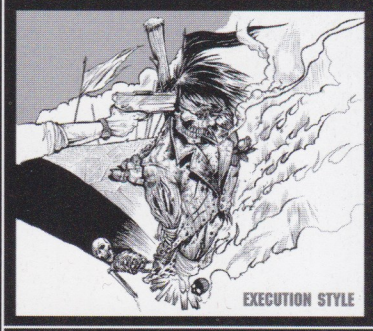
PANIC

"Dying For It" - 6 song 7" & 7 song MCD featuring Gibby (of The Trouble) on vocals. Out October 30th, 2001.



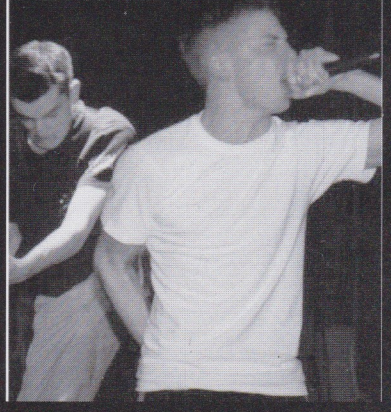
COPS AND ROBBERS

"Execution Style" 7"/MCD. Early 80's style Boston Hardcore. Along the lines of SSD, DYS... Out October 2nd, 2001.



NO WARNING

Self-Titled 9 song CD. 6 song 7" vinyl on Marty Records. For fans of Madball, Cro-Mags, or Breakdown. CD out October 2nd, 2001.



BRIDGE NINE

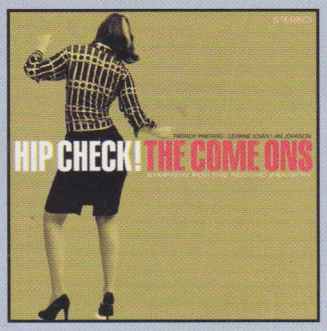
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COOL new releases from...

SYMPATHY
for the record industry

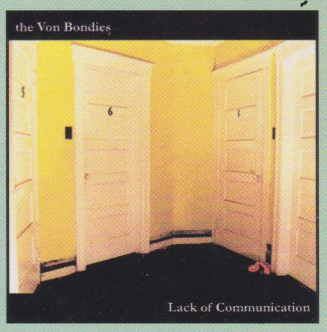
Lotsa COOL records from the COOL world of Sympathy!!!

The Come Ons' new release features 12 hip-shakin' tracks. It boasts 10 originals and two covers, mixing sweet and sexy grinders amid funky instrumentals characteristic of their first LP. Songs delivered by "a deep, lusty, girl in love voice" lend a sultry quality to their familiar pop/rhythm & blues music. Unlike most garage-soul bands, they never digress into common guitar rock fusion. Hip Check! was engineered and co-produced by Jim Diamond at Ghetto Recorders in Detroit.





Backed by incredible hooks, huge choruses and gutt wrenching guitars Tina struts her stuff on these 10 hot trax. From the all night dance stomp of "It's All About Makin' Out" to the heart breakin power ballad "Tragedy". Not since the days of Josie Cotton, Holly & the Italians and Pearl Harbor has there been such an album that can follow you to the beach, on a hot date, or just cruisin' down the street at 1a.m. lookin' for trouble. No matter where you are, get ready cuz, "It's Tina Time"!



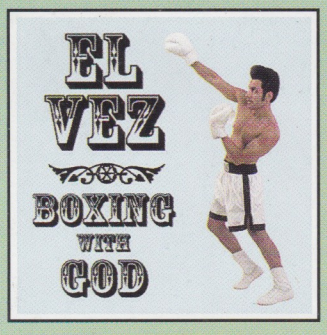
Okay, here's the deal: Lock up two girls and two boys in an old house in Detroit with walls stained and decaying from years of neglect, and what do you get? You get the eerie soundtrack of young, depraved America. This debut produced by Jack White (the White Stripes) is full of pulsating, creepy and often extremely sinister rock n' roll. Alone in the world of their own intriguing design, the Von Bondies are set to blast a jagged fault line in modern music's landscape.

COOL MUSIC !!!

Rejoice dear hearts for the collective stars alight for the long awaited debut from the illustrious American Death Ray. This release offers a glimpse into the beautiful din and midnight blue of this curiously elusive band. The songs represented here are of a band at play in the garden of good and evil. Comfort is found in mixing the dark with the celebratory kiss of class along side the pallid trash.



IT'S COOL, baby!!!



El Vez has stepped into the Spiritual Ring to take on all challengers. Just as Elvis studied the world's theologies, El Vez is ready to go toe to toe, mano a mano with styles and religious ideas in the way only he can. It's a Judeo-Christian, Zen Buddhist, Krishna Consciousness, Santeria, Aztec Sacrifice, Religious Experience! This ain't no Church Picnic! Traditional walks hand and a hand with the...well, you know El Vez. Guaranteed to be a knockout!

DID I mention COOL?

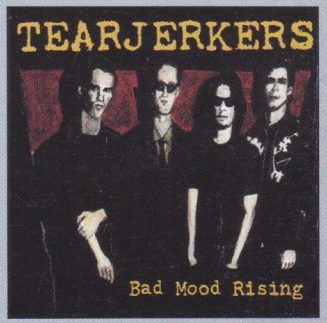
This is the real shit! You get 14 absolute killers that never quit! You are actually forced to dance. Les Sexareenos take the best elements from 50's and 60's rock n'roll/soul/frat/R&B and garage, and blast it all back at'cha. This ain't retro! This is now! This is what rock n'roll was meant to be. Welcome to the sordid little world of Les Sexareenos.



Pound Down! features 13 brand spankin' new, heart thumpin', hip grinding, head boppin' R&B numbers that are sure to catch even the most discerning and discriminating rock n' roll aficionados off guard. The Del-Gators' debut album is completely dirty, it's wet and wild, it's what you've been praying for, dude!



Hey y'all, here comes one straight outta Memphis, TN. Shitfire! It's Jack Yarbrough a.k.a. Jack Oblivian. Look for it in the "they made me do it" bins. Recorded at gunpoint at Easley studio in rut town. The Tearjerkers' debut album, Bad Mood Rising, will sound best in a car...with some friends... with some money.



SYMPATHYRECORDS.COM